

*Suggested Lack of Urban Policy*

Last Wednesday or Thursday when I learned of the subject of today's motion, I thought that it might be the first tangible evidence of the positive approach to Parliament which the Chairman of the Progressive Conservative caucus had announced the previous weekend following their think-in. That impression was destroyed when I found that this was not to be their day or their motion. It is nevertheless a precedent which I would commend to the Official Opposition as a solid example of positivism. There have been no others to date, but we await developments with interest if not optimism. I include today's question period and the responses to the statements on motions.

Substance is something else. However much one may appreciate the positive approach taken procedurally in the presentation of this motion, its primitive simplicity leads one to conclude that nothing else important has occurred. The NDP are still dealing with a Canada that doesn't exist, a Canada that they either wish or imagine, a simple, homogeneous, unitary state of the geographic proportions of Lichtenstein; the social, cultural, economic and ideological homogeneity of the Holy See, and the political tranquility of the Garden of Eden—before the serpent. This simplistic, unreal Canada exists only in the minds of the socialists.

It came through loud and clear in our dealings with the Canada Water Act, both in the resources committee and in the House. Their position is that water of pristine purity can be achieved by legislative action of the Parliament of Canada every place in Canada, right now, without regard to the provinces, without regard to industry, without regard to people dependent on industry for goods or for jobs. We just pass a law, without regard to whether it is constitutional, whether the factories close or whether the workers are unemployed. Those will be next week's problems and priorities. This week's problem is water and this week's priority is to legislate, instant, absolute purity. Next week's problem will be industrial atrophy and next week's priority will be to legislate jobs.

My purpose today is not to demonstrate the advantages of federalism, but surely it is not unreasonable to expect that political parties and members of Parliament at least recognize the fact of Canadian federalism and the fact that in this federation most areas of particular and specific application to urban Canada are today within the legislative competence of the provincial, not the national, government.

[Mr. Mahoney.]

Recognition of the fact is not an admission that it is right or appropriate, or an assertion that the fact ought not to be changed. Recognition of the fact is, however, a condition precedent to practical policies as opposed to the Alice in Wonderland approach displayed by members opposite so far.

The evolution of Canada from a rural to urban nation has been noted by previous speakers, and the fact remains that we are confronted by the necessity to cope with the already heavy and ever-growing problems of our cities in the context of a rural constitution. The federal government cannot deal directly with the cities of Canada on urban problems over provincial objections. Surely, the essence of democracy is that government, like the citizen, must be bound by the law. In a federal democracy, the different levels of government must be bound by law in dealings between themselves as well as between government and citizen. If you are prepared to sacrifice the essence of democracy in this, that, or the other given crisis, you will end up with something other than a democracy.

There is no general agreement on the definition of "the city." Some would say that a city is not a physical thing at all but rather an attitude, a state of mind, an image of the heart. Others regard it as a giant physical organism, an image easy to appreciate when you approach a great city by air on a clear night. Every day huge quantities of water, food, fuel and other materials are brought into it and consumed by it producing wastes that pollute its air, its water and its land as well as the air, water and land around it. Still others see the political definition of the city as increasingly meaningless, its geographic boundaries irrelevant. The meaningful definitions of the city are its conceptual boundaries such as its commercial life, its educational effort, its cultural milieu. It is not just hardware like telephone systems, roads, sewers or school buildings; it is software like banking systems, emergency medical care, and the theatre.

Whatever the definition of the city, we can agree that the physical features, the hardware, have a profound influence on the shape and direction of the other, inherently more important, but largely dependent, dimensions or functions. Initially at least, probably forever, it is within the field of urban hardware that government can best operate to establish the physical environment within which people,—private enterprise, individual inspira-