

Adjournment Debate

developers to whom long-term leases had been given by the former Harbourfront board.”

[*Translation*]

I asked the question: “Why should the federal government pay a premium to get land back?”, meaning pay more than it is worth. The federal government has the power to expropriate land. If the owners of these leasehold interests do not want to sell them back to the government at fair market value, instead of arranging to give them a premium, more than fair market value, the federal government has the recourse of taking the land back and having the court determine what a fair value is.

I think a fundamental error has been made in moving from dealing with land at fair market value to paying premiums to developers to get land back that it is determined should be put back into recreational and other activity related uses for Harbourfront.

I also feel—we raised this in our questions—that it is a mistake to give fee simple, that is, permanent ownership of this land to developers. The way in which the former Harbourfront board of directors was proceeding was to just give long-term leases. Eventually, these interests would revert to the people of Canada.

After the period when I asked my question took place, the board of Harbourfront, the members of which were all appointed by the federal government, refused to adopt the solution that the federal government is trying to impose. It refused to play ball with the government in allowing this transfer to take place. Even though they were federal appointees and good Tories, they refused to go along with it.

The government had to wait for the term of office of the Harbourfront directors to expire and then appoint nominal people who were committed to the government's agenda and to their transitional program to try to carry out this unpopular solution which is no solution because it will not work.

Hopefully, today we will be able to hear that the government is at least waiting for the city of Toronto's report and will not proceed with the program which we were so critical of last December.

Mrs. Nicole Roy-Arcelin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, the new approach to the management of Toronto's harbourfront announced last November by the Minister of Public Works is a fair, intelligent and progressive solution to a rather complex problem. It is the result of months of consultations with many interested organizations. It shows the foresight, imagination, and sustained effort of many groups and individuals.

The most important feature of this new plan is that it will give the Toronto waterfront back to Torontonians. As David Crombie recommended, all new construction south of Queen's Quay-West must cease, with the possible exception of small buildings that the city considers to be in the public interest. From now on, this area will contain only public land and buildings. It will be given over to Torontonians and the many visitors who go there every year.

Under this new plan, a public charitable foundation will be set up to fund the very popular, cultural, recreational and educational programs of the new Harbourfront Corporation.

This will allow its new programs to be put of a sound financial basis enabling the Harbourfront Corporation to plan activities more freely and with confidence in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the plan being implemented reflects the remarkable consensus arrived at by those who formulated it. It reflects the opinion of the hon. David Crombie who, for over two years, has been playing a major role in defining what lays ahead for the Toronto waterfront. The key elements of this plan were first set out in August 1989 in the first interim report of Mr. Crombie's Royal Commission on the future of the Toronto waterfront. This plan also contains ideas expressed in the study Mr. Duncan Allan, the Premier of Ontario's advisor on the development of the Toronto waterfront, commissioned by of the Ontario government. Throughout the development of this plan, there were consultations with the City of Toronto, including the mayor, the aldermen and representatives from various municipal services as well as with the Toronto Urban