

*Urban Affairs*

ways of creating a national process involving all key actors in order to define our urban objectives and the policies required to achieve them. Fifth, it was also clear that the very complexity and all-inclusive nature of urban problems and the very number of major actors involved argued against any traditional concept of creating a new federal department of urban affairs in order to achieve the required research, policy development and co-ordinative objectives. Hence, Mr. Speaker, the ministry of state for urban affairs. It is not a department. It will not take directly unto itself any program delivery capability. I think the very nature and complexity of the issues we are facing argue against the concept that policy emerges only from those entrusted with its administration. It embraces the concept that objective policy development across a broad range of activities and authorities can emerge when unfettered by the vested interests that grow from administering programs.

• (8:10 p.m.)

I hasten to say that while policy formulation will be separated from program administration in this ministry of state, it will not be to enjoy the artificial world of the ivory tower but to assist in the shaping of all policies and to influence the implementation of programs that affect the urban environment, to the benefit of all Canadians and without having to duplicate or to take over delivery systems that in many cases already exist in other departments and agencies of the government.

The ministry is purposely named the ministry of urban affairs, not urban affairs and housing, urban affairs and transport or urban affairs and land management; and it is so named because its policy mandate is unrestricted and as wide as possible while its direct operational role is non-existent. The ministry's role will be co-ordinative as between federal policies and their departments. It will be supportive of all relevant federal programs and projects on behalf of comprehensive urban policy. It will be consultative with the provinces and their municipalities in achieving, hopefully, with the co-operation of the provinces and the municipalities an integrated approach to solving urban problems that none of the three areas of jurisdiction can solve on its own.

I think in all the policy areas that I could explore with hon. members it has been too easy for too long simply to blame the problems of urban blight, congestion, soaring land prices, slums, inadequate housing and pollution on another level of government. Equally, it has been too easy for the federal government unilaterally to develop, in what I am afraid has been an ad hoc fashion, one policy or one program to come to this House and the people of the country and suggest that now this one new program of urban renewal, urban transit or whatever it is will solve the complex urban problems that have accumulated over the decades.

Such simplistic and patchwork responses may solve short-term political problems but they do not, I submit, solve urban problems; and in fact that approach is often a perverse one. Thus, we are not asking the House tonight for this kind of program authority. We want to

break that deceptive and misleading chain. We do not intend to present politically appealing yet simplistic, apparent cure-all solutions. We want the support of the members of this House for the creation of a new organizational form, launching a new process that will allow us within our own government and together with the provinces, cities and people of Canada, really to start tackling the root causes of enduring and growing urban problems that no modern nation to date has succeeded in coping with effectively. In attacking these issues we hope to raise urban life in this country to the high level of satisfaction and accomplishment that it ought to have.

I am grateful for the fact that many on both sides of the House have given us encouragement and support in this endeavour over the past two years. I also want to recognize the agreement of the provinces in our search. A new atmosphere prevails in urban affairs discussions—tenuous, fragile, but nevertheless there—with the provinces. There seems to be an order of political leadership that is seeking reasons for and new forms of collaboration.

In trying over the last two years to develop a consensus on the need for a national urban policy and new institutions, the municipalities of this nation have also sought the higher, and perhaps more difficult, plane of longer term solutions. I congratulate them, as well as the leadership of the various provincial and municipal associations and the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities, particularly their two past presidents, Mayors O'Brien and Dent, and now their new president, Mayor D'Amour of Hull.

More specifically, in our discussions with the provinces and representatives of Canadian municipalities over the past year I think it is fair to say that significant progress has been achieved. General acceptance has been given to the principle that the three levels of government, whose urban activities are so interdependent, must find new ways of meeting together so that our policies and programs will become better understood, more interdependent and complementary, and not contradictory in the pursuit of common objectives and priorities.

What I describe as an historic meeting took place in Winnipeg in April of this year. I, representing the federal government, the ministers of municipal affairs of the provinces and representatives of Canadian municipalities from coast to coast held a meeting which led to the formation of a committee of all three levels of government charged with creating a national forum for continuing consultation. While only one step along the long road to new forms of intergovernmental collaboration, in my opinion at least our collective recognition that we can no longer talk of problems of Canadian cities unless the cities themselves are party to such discussion has been a significant departure. We meet again in Victoria on August 25, in what I hope and expect will be a further and conclusive step in this direction.

I think it is now widely held and accepted in this country that Canada is an urban society that is based upon a highly industrialized economy. This reality clearly demands co-ordinated urban policies by the federal government in the many areas of jurisdiction that affect

[Mr. Andras.]