

*Federal Co-operation in Urban Problems*

tion on this issue. After all we are dealing with the lives of millions and millions of Canadians. So, Mr. Speaker, I do not raise this subject to suggest that the government of Canada should dictate to others, should dictate to the provinces, should dictate to our cities and municipal governments. But in saying that, I do not mean to take away at all from my intense belief that the federal government must take initiatives in association with the provinces and with the municipal governments. I also believe that the federal government must broaden its interests. For example, if we think in terms of urban transportation posing a very acute problem in many of our cities, is there any particular reason, stemming from our traditions or constitutional considerations, why the federal interest in housing and in urban redevelopment should not be so interpreted as to include a consideration of and participation in the solution of transportation problems?

How can the federal government participate in a meaningful way in solving housing problems and urban redevelopment problems unless it is prepared to become involved in and help with problems of urban transportation? The federal government should be prepared to participate in studies of its own transportation policies to see how they have affected and are likely to affect the cities. This involves study of plane, train, and interprovincial bus services, as well as the federal involvement in roads. I believe the federal government should be prepared to involve itself on an urgent basis with the other two levels of government in consideration of inter and intra-urban transportation systems, and should also involve itself in commissioning and participating financially in research into these and related problems. It should be prepared to involve itself in the actual solution of these problems. How can the federal government do a meaningful job or involve itself in a meaningful way in the solution of the housing problem or the problem of urban redevelopment, unless it is prepared to get involved in the study of city transportation problems? I am again emphasizing the role of co-operation rather than the role of dictation or trying to lay down the law.

• (1520)

This kind of participation in meeting the problems of the city is all the more urgent, first of all, because of the extra burden that the federal government has imposed upon the municipalities as a result of the massive unemployment developed in the country and, second, because of the stand-pat position it has taken with regard to tax-sharing.

The tax-sharing agreement that will arise out of the proposed legislation before the House is really an extension of existing arrangements for tax sharing. There are changes in some details but by and large the tax-sharing arrangements proposed for the next five years are basically those that have been in effect for the past five years. In other words, the tax-sharing arrangements between the federal government and the provinces that are before the House indicate no recognition, and certainly are not based upon any recognition, of the growing needs and expenditures in the areas of provincial and municipal responsibility, especially in the large urban areas.

I remind the House again of the studies conducted some years ago by federal and provincial officials working

[Mr. Stanfield.]

together. They forecast the growth in municipal and provincial expenditures in relation to the growth in the responsibility to the federal government. The federal government authorized this study but paid no attention to it. Now, we are again in the position where the government of Canada has chosen not to recognize the growing responsibilities of the provinces and cities in bringing forward a tax-sharing arrangement. Indeed, the only tangible thing the federal government has done in this area is increase the amount spent on welfare. The growing welfare burden and the general tendency of provincial and municipal responsibilities to grow more rapidly in costs, make it all the more necessary that we have active and meaningful federal participation in meeting the urban challenge in this country.

I think there was some optimism early in the year in this general area of co-operation involving municipal government and relating to municipal and urban problems. There was the Winnipeg conference in the month of April and following that a period of optimism. This optimism seemed to fade following the August meeting of the minister responsible in the federal government, the then minister of State for urban affairs, with the provincial ministers of municipal affairs and the joint municipal committee, and in the meeting in August involving the three levels of government. This was followed by a feeling of very considerable disappointment. The progress toward common policies in this area and the progress toward working together in some effective way is not noticeable. I hope the minister will be able to persuade me that I am wrong, and that much is going on in this area of which that neither I nor the country generally is aware. I must say to the minister, through you, Mr. Speaker, that visible progress toward achieving common policies and some effective involvement in a co-operative way is not obvious to the naked eye.

I repeat, Mr. Speaker, I am not looking for this government or any government—in fact I would be opposed to this government or any government—trying to apply an urban strategy across the board. I do not ask for that and I would be opposed to it, but we do need a national approach to urban problems which would include flexibility and adaptability. I assume that the federal government has a national responsibility in this matter. This does not mean that it can or should try to solve the problems by itself. I am convinced that the federal government can co-operate, can provide the co-ordinating framework for the cities and provinces alike. It does not have to impose itself on anyone and it should not impose itself on anyone. Events themselves are imposing the need for co-operation on all three levels of government. I do not think any of the three levels will come out of this new process of consultation exactly as it went in. I do not deny that jurisdictional disputes may arise from time to time, but that is not the point. The point is that we do not have the right to refuse to embark upon this process and should do so very quickly. We are not merely dealing with structures here, although we need an appropriate structure; we are dealing with the future of the people and we cannot allow ourselves to forget this.

It is not enough for the federal government to appoint a minister of state for urban affairs and then let matters drift, leaving the cities and municipal governments to sink