

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Speaker, I should like to explain right away the statement of my hon. friend from St. Boniface. I made two trips with the committee on immigration, and I think I made the representations I felt I should make. Then I gave my place to another colleague for the other two trips of the committee. As there are only three Quebecers on this side of the House, I feel we share responsibilities equally. That is why I deplore the interventions of the hon. member for St. Boniface. I would never be so bold as to chide the hon. member for being away from his committee, knowing full well that he has other work to do elsewhere as well. Finally, Mr. Speaker, I think that opinion is unfortunate, but I shall continue. I believe my time has almost expired—

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Order, please. I must inform both hon. members that they are out of order; they have not addressed themselves to the substance of the motion. We should return to that subject forthwith.

[Translation]

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Speaker, I simply conclude. My remarks are almost over and I trust the committee will make excellent work and receive an attentive ear from the government. I also hope the remarks I made concerning the provinces as well as all concerned will contribute to the success of that project. The government must know that the opposition will work in a most objective way toward the realization of that project for the benefit of all Canadians and particularly of those who are directly interested in this area that will be called the national capital.

Mr. Isabelle: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I should like to correct slightly what the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) has just said, that I agree with him that the city of Hull should negotiate with regard to all that is going on within the National Capital Commission. It should also enter into negotiations with the federal government regarding matters within the national capital region.

Unfortunately, and that is what I should like to point out, the province of Quebec has just taken away from Hull the right to negotiate any contract with the federal government or its official agency, the National Capital Commission. It has created for such a purpose the General Directorate of the Affairs of the National Capital. I do not know what it means, but in any event that is what it is called, and it comprises 21 civil servants all residing in Quebec City. This is what I call backwards democracy.

Mr. La Salle: We shall have to mention the matter to Mr. Bourassa.

Mr. Gaston Clermont (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, the motion under consideration is designed to appoint a special joint committee of the Senate and House of Commons to review and report upon matters bearing upon the development of the national capital area, including the programs and operations of the National Capital Commission.

As we all know, the act now governing the National Capital Commission goes back to 1958, and since that time

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a great deal of changes have taken place on both sides of the Ottawa River, changes that call for amendments in the powers of the commission.

● (1650)

On May 17th, 1973, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) announced that Mr. Douglas H. Fullerton would be resigning his position as Chairman of the National Capital Commission to undertake a special study on the capital for the government.

The terms of reference were given in the press release as follows:

To undertake a study of the most effective arrangements for the future administration of matters directly affecting the national capital and its development, including the role of the National Capital Commission and its relation to other bodies concerned with the governing of the capital region and the coordination of those federal activities which bear upon the development of region as a national capital.

The Fullerton report, as it is called by the information media, was published in October 1974, and in certain sectors, it was not very well received. In its Speech from the Throne of September 30, 1974, the government thought it necessary to take new steps to promote its national awareness program and, to this end, it suggested several measures including the institution of a joint committee of the House and the Senate to study the issues related to the future of the national capital area, and this is the reason for this motion. There is no doubt that the Fullerton report, along with several other papers, will be referred to this committee. In its annual report, published on October 15, 1974, the National Capital Commission said, and I quote:

The NCC believes that its powers are diminishing. It therefore thinks that it is both timely and essential for the various political authorities of the region to find new grounds for agreement and to really act in cooperation as concerns planning of the territory.

In the document titled "The Capital of Tomorrow", the NCC made a number of propositions to achieve the government's goal of a capital city located on both sides of the river and to improve the quality of life and environment on the Quebec side of the Ottawa Valley. Here are three:

1—Using federal property to meet area population needs, especially in the fields of housing, transportation and green spaces; 2—Increasing the number of public servants by up to 25 per cent of the federal complement in the area, in 1985 (some 30,000 jobs); 3—Participating in the establishment of a modern and efficient public transit system.

Before 1969, the NCC was practically the only federal, provincial or municipal body doing planning and land use on the Quebec side of the national capital area. In the context of that bureaucratic vacuum, the NCC implemented the recommendations made by French town planner Jacques Greber in his land use scheme for the national capital, that is:

The reclaiming of Ottawa and Gatineau rivers; the consolidation of 88,000 acres in the Gatineau Park; the reserving of certain corridors for driveways; and the relocation of rail lines in the downtown area.

The NCC's document titled "The Capital of Tomorrow" will no doubt be referred also to the joint committee.

The federal government is criticized in certain circles for its participation in certain projects to improve the highway system on the Quebec side and the construction of public buildings in Hull. Those people imply that the federal government is not at home anymore on the Quebec