

lawyer, non-lawyer, whether he has been here one year or ten years, knows what is obvious. The minister does not have to spend time underlining the fact that this is the prerogative of the provinces and municipalities and that he does not have the authority to plan municipal growth. We know that.

What the people of Canada, 70 per cent of them living in the urban regions of Canada, are saying to this government is that decades of neglect have resulted in intractable problems in our cities. They say the federal government has a duty to take the initiative in leadership to seek a solution to these problems because if this is not done in time we will have the same kind of violent reaction on the streets of our cities as the United States has had on the streets of its cities. This is the issue to which we want the government to address itself.

The minister does not have to spend time persuading hon. members that no matter what authority they belong to, these problems are difficult and cannot be solved overnight, that there are many differences of opinion as to what should be done about public housing, urban renewal, the size of cities and that many countries of the world have found these problems very difficult and heavy. The minister does not have to waste his time telling us that. Everyone in this house knows this problem will not be solved overnight, but they and all Canadians know the problem will never be solved unless a start is made in organizing the agencies for its solution. This is where the failure of the government comes in.

If one analyses the election of the Prime Minister and this government exactly a year ago, one sees that in no area has the Prime Minister and his government so blatantly betrayed the expectations they raised in the minds of the Canadian people than in their failure to provide leadership toward a solution of the urban problems in Canada today. I watched the election which ended exactly a year ago today. I visited constituents in my riding. I also visited other ridings and spoke in a good many other places. The one thing that struck me about the reaction of the people who said they would support Mr. Trudeau and his colleagues at that time—permit me to use the name of the Prime Minister in this context—was that he gave the impression he had some kind of feel for the fact the urban people were being oppressed by a lack of transportation, crowded streets, lack of recreational facilities for the children, lack of

Alleged Failure to Cope With Urban Growth
day-care nurseries for the children of working mothers and the alienation of people in apartment houses. They believed this man who led the Liberal party had some sense in dealing with all these problems. They thought he had a feeling for the fact there was change in the community and for the realization that the centre of that change in a modern industrial society was the metropolitan area, necessarily and inevitably. These people voted for this man and his party a year ago today because of the expectation they had that the Prime Minister had some kind of sensitivity about the problems of people living in the large metropolitan areas of Canada as well as the smaller urban communities. How wrong they were!

I say not only as a member of an opposition party but as a Canadian that the Prime Minister, the minister in charge of housing and all the other members of this government ought to look at themselves in the mirror, if they can stand it, to see what they have done to betray the expectations they raised exactly a year ago. There is still time for them to correct the situation.

The issue, as stated by the hon. member for Hamilton West, is where the government should direct its attention and its initiative. I cannot suggest a blueprint in the 20 minutes I am allowed; however, I will make two concrete suggestions in a moment. The Economic Council of Canada in its fourth annual review stated the problem as follows:

—there has long been widespread concern about the mounting deficiencies of our cities and the heavy backlogs of essential improvements. Shortages and inadequacy of urban housing, traffic and transport problems, air and water pollution, the confused jumble of conflicting land uses, decaying neighbourhoods and monotonous suburbs, urban poverty and social disturbance, steadily rising property tax burdens and the frustrations of municipal administration—these are familiar problems to the average Canadian city dweller today.

We ask the government to direct its attention to these issues outlined by the Economic Council of Canada. In their report they also state these issues have become so important for all the people of Canada that they are national problems requiring national attention and solution.

• (4:50 p.m.)

What the minister has to face is not the fact that he is at last doing a little bit more for public housing, but the criminality of having stopped public housing for most of the past winter. This is what he has to face. He has to face not the excuse that he is at last