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CANADA IN THE NEXT THIRTY YEARS

The following excerpts are from a recent speech by the Minister of Forestry and Rural Development, Mr. Maurice Sauvé, at the Italian pavilion at Expo '67 in Montreal:

...Let us consider very briefly what destiny awaits Canada during the coming years.

Probably the most significant factor will be the tremendous expansion of our cities. Our high rate of agricultural productivity is one of the chief reasons for the shift to the city. Just recently, the Economic Council of Canada pointed out that agriculture's total manpower needs do not exceed 7 per cent of the Canadian labour force; that 92 per cent of the population increase between 1951 and 1961 was concentrated in the urban areas and that, between 1961 and 1966, this 92 per cent had almost reached 100 per cent. Strange as it may seem, here, in the Province of Quebec, the Montreal area is the only one whose population has increased between 1961 and 1966....

In the field of employment, jobs in the tertiary sector (office workers, salesmen, professionals and so on) are increasing far more rapidly than in the secondary industries (manufacturing, building, etc.), following the pattern set in the United States. We all know that university registrations are rising steeply. In 1961, the university population was 114,000; today the figure is 210,000 and by 1976 it will have risen to 525,000 students. Needless to say, cities which boast of the best universities and which offer most job openings in the tertiary sector are the very ones which have the highest rate of population growth.

It is also interesting to note recent trends in housing construction. Today, apartment buildings, those hives of human habitation, account for more than 30 per cent (the figure will soon reach 40 per cent) of all housing units built in Canada.

Public expenditures afford another revealing indication of the trend in modern Canada. By themselves, the budgets of provincial and municipal governments (including regional and metropolitan authorities) account for three-quarters of overall government operating expenditures in Canada and four-fifths of total capital investments. According to Professor Hanson, of the University of Alberta, these proportions may be expected to grow even larger during the next few years.

The City of Montreal is a particularly appropriate place to talk about the trend towards municipal mergers. What is happening here is a reflection of what is going on all over the country. Most of you will recall the creation of the City of Laval in 1965 and the recent recommendations of the Lemay Commission concerning the South Shore. Encouraging and even obliging municipalities to merge is a new trend, of which there have been evidences in Toronto in 1953 and in Winnipeg in 1960. These are, however, isolated cases and it will come as no surprise to you to hear that there are 4,400 municipal governments in Canada, and 1,750 in Quebec alone.

Urbanization, as a phenomenon, has but recently ceased to scare us. The spectre of the large city swallowing up the countryside and tempting farmers away from their land is now a thing of the past.