

Suggested Lack of Urban Policy

solve urban problems if they are not regarded as problems arising within urbanizing regions.

The problems of urban centres arise in the regions around them, for example, problems of urban transportation and housing. To illustrate this point, let me refer to metropolitan Toronto where land costs alone for housing purposes are so high and land is so scarce that people of moderate means, let alone those on low incomes, find it almost impossible to own a house of their own. The answer to some of Toronto's housing problems is in the townships of Pickering, Vaughan and Markham, that is, in the surrounding regions. It is impossible to solve such problems unless there is some jurisdiction encompassing them. The municipalities are too fragmented to resolve these issues. I suggest that only the province is in a position to rearrange municipalities in regional structures where such issues as housing, pollution and transportation may be resolved.

I think one condition of resolving these problems is the adoption of a systems approach, that is to say, a comprehensive planning and implementation approach. It is no longer acceptable that housing be regarded as a single problem. Housing requires pollution control and transportation systems. Transportation embraces other issues. Housing draws us into the field of schooling and recreation. We have to consider all these urban problems in the round. We have to consider them in the context of a systems approach, a comprehensive approach. Once again it seems to me that only if the provinces play their role by putting the municipalities into a regional setting and by drawing the federal government into the resolution of those issues on the basis of comprehensive planning are we likely to make any real headway. In other words, this is an intergovernmental problem.

Another condition of success, I suggest, is that we must take a long-term perspective; that is to say, we should be looking at the year 2000, not at this year or next year, since we are seeking to create an urban environment of a decent kind, a human environment that we will be living with for decades to come. If I might digress for a moment, it seems to me that this need for a long-term approach in itself justifies the entrance of political parties into major urban centres. Only through urban politics of this kind can long-term policies be developed within urban centres and around which groups of people can adhere for long periods of time.

[Mr. O'Connell.]

The approach to a resolution of the major urban problems to which many others have pointed, and which I accept as the basic issues without touching on them myself, is that we develop some intergovernmental machinery. I do not think that in speaking of the role of the federal government it would be enough simply to find new ways of co-ordinating all of its presences, its inputs, in urban centres. It is doing this now under the guidance of the minister responsible for housing and urban affairs, but it will not be enough simply to have better co-ordination of the federal functions, the federal presence at airports, harbours, and so on.

Nor would it be enough if the provinces, or even the municipalities, better co-ordinated their functions for resolving urban problems. There has to be intergovernmental machinery created for purposes of consultation, planning on a regional base, and indeed for implementing the programs which come out of that planning. I suggest that in the Department of Regional Economic Expansion some models for three-way intergovernmental planning and implementation are already being worked out. Necessarily, these models are being worked out in the slow-growth regions. However, as I think all members realize, the programs of the department are urban programs; they are focused upon urban growth centres and bring the federal government deeply into the urban field with programs that are jointly arranged with the provinces and provide for municipal collaboration. These are programs for urban development which bring the federal government for the first time into infrastructures, into schools, into roads, water and sewer systems which are normally within the jurisdiction of other governments. There is no need to disturb the constitution in this respect. The constitution is no obstacle to the resolution of major urban problems.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. O'Connell: The problem lies with policy, not with the constitution. It is up to us, the provinces and the municipalities which have not fought the fight with their own provinces to bring about the kind of intergovernmental approaches that are now being developed in slow-growth regions and that are surely extendable to rapid-growth regions such as the major urban centres of Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Edmonton, and so on. If time permitted I would illustrate these themes with what I would say are dramatic innovations recently