

*National Capital Act*

be described. But apart from that, the commission is simply not capable of efficient, effective management of the green belt in accordance with the mandate from this parliament. This bill would give them the necessary advice and assistance.

To what purposes would the proposed green belt advisory committee work? So that hon. members may appreciate the basic purposes and functions of the green belt, perhaps I may paraphrase some of the descriptive material which appears in the report of the joint Senate and House of Commons committee of 1956 on the national capital, a committee of which my hon. friend from Ottawa East (Mr. Richard) was a member.

The green belt is intended to control the physical limits of the metropolitan area and thus limit the ultimate population of Ottawa. The control of population is designed as a technique of providing for the economic development of municipal and other services within the metropolitan area. The green belt is intended to maintain sites which in the future can be used by federal buildings and institutions requiring large areas. It will provide future park areas to serve the future metropolitan population which lives on both sides of the green belt. Outside the green belt the population would live in satellite communities, and these are already developing in such communities as Kanata and Glencairn.

The protection of the physical outer limit of the national capital limits federal participation and involvement in the area. If the central core were permitted to expand indefinitely as a metropolitan area, the national capital might some day be spread over most of eastern Ontario. In that case there would and could be no limit to the involvement and financial responsibility of the federal government to the national capital.

● (5:20 p.m.)

In the same report to which I have been referring and which I have been attempting to paraphrase, permissible uses for green belt properties were outlined as being housing and agricultural uses on lands of more than 5½ acres; hospitals, religious institutions, educational institutions and public buildings on lands of more than 10 acres; churches, libraries and museums on lands of more than 3 acres; commercial and/or industrial undertakings on lands of more than 10 acres; and farms of at least 20 acres. These early, indeed original statements of permissible uses have been, I believe, refined considerably, but regrettably there has never been an up to date

[Mr. Bell (Carleton).]

statement of governmental or commission policy in respect of this matter. This is one of the reasons why I would like to see a joint committee of the Senate and House of Commons, as I have advocated on a number of occasions at this session of parliament.

I would invite, sir, the interested hon. members of this house, and indeed members of the public, to examine the returns which were produced in the house on April 20, 1966 to questions 792 and 793 posed by me, which returns give more information about the existing plans for development of the green belt for recreational, governmental, reforestation and conservation purposes. I believe that lack of expert advice has led to many erroneous decisions, decisions such as the reforestation of one of the finest farms in the whole Ottawa area, the Harold K. Nesbitt farm. This is a farm which is completely tile drained and highly productive as a dairy farm, and has one of the best orchards ever developed in eastern Ontario. No farm less susceptible to reforestation could be found anywhere in Canada and at this very moment I believe the commission is considering tearing out the thousands of trees planted in 1965, and restoring the land to the agricultural purposes for which, particularly with expensive tile draining, it is eminently suited. One of the things which this bill is designed to do is to prevent these mistakes from being permitted to recur.

I believe, sir, that without expert advice for the National Capital Commission, the green belt could become a weed belt—a “tatty acres”, a ramshackledown—or a publicly owned Tobacco Road. It is to avoid these undesirable developments that this bill proposes the establishment of a green belt advisory committee of not fewer than five, nor more than 12 persons, of whom a majority shall be persons experienced in farm or forestry management with a special knowledge of local conditions and circumstances in the national capital region.

Under the existing legislation, sir, the National Capital Commission could have appointed such a committee of their own initiative and without additional parliamentary authority. All this bill does is to make mandatory that which is now permissive.

What has interested, indeed fascinated, me is that since this bill was introduced the National Capital Commission has established, on February 28, 1966, what is called the