

wards in the order of 15,000 jobs, of which only 5,000 are permanent.

Nevertheless it was inconceivable to me what monstrously bad planning advice the NCC offered. Then it said to the regional municipalities: "If you don't conform to our vision of how things are going to be, you can't cross our land". They own large blocks of land in this region, and they threatened in an arbitrary, tyrannical, irresponsible fashion to thwart the plans of the regional municipalities, plans which were arrived at after extensive public hearings in a democratic way, because they did not conform to the ideals of those heaven-sent planners hired by the Crown corporation called the National Capital Commission.

If we can learn anything from the Washington experience it is that we cannot create a body with excessive powers which are essentially based on land ownership. And based on its current concept of its mandate it should not be permitted, although theoretically responsible to an elected body, indirectly to the cabinet through its Crown corporation status, to act in the way that the Auditor General criticized when they subverted the will of parliament in the exchange of properties they had no business acquiring, in the way in which they kept their books, and in the way they let contracts without tenders.

There is a house cleaning job to be done in that commission. I want to say, to the credit of the former chairman, who I think was a conscientious and good chairman, that he became aware of the magnitude of the problem and he kept a low profile. He quietly worked at improving relations and brought a personal integrity to his job, and I want to pay tribute to him for that on this occasion.

The task of re-examining the powers and functions of the National Capital Commission is an imperative task. Those of us who are residents of the area say to the members of this place and the other place who will serve on that committee: "Please take an interest and do a job." We want this capital to be a place that is a showpiece, a pride, a symbol of Canadian nationhood. We want it to be a place where the two official languages and the various cultures that have made this country will all feel at home; a place where there is a part of them in this national symbol. But we want it also to be a democratic capital with its two systems of property and civil law, one on the Quebec side and one on the Ontario side; a capital with its two systems of education, and the multiplicity that is involved in the most complicated national capital that any nation in the modern world has attempted to create. The task, Mr. Speaker, is a very great task. I hope that the committee will be struck and that the terms of reference will be before it shortly. I hope too that hon. members will proceed and a report will follow which will be of great assistance to the government and the new chairman for setting the policy for the years ahead.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, even though the hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton (Mrs. Pigott) and the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis) may have some matters on which they do not agree, they are in agreement on what is being asked for, both in this motion and in the motion in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa

National Capital Commission

West, although that one is not before us today. In both cases they are seeking some democratization of the operations of the National Capital Commission. That is a position, Mr. Speaker, that I think should be fully supported by this House.

I was glad to hear the hon. member for Ottawa West say a few things which make it clear that he realizes, even though he is an Ottawa resident, that there is a sense in which this area belongs to Canada. It is the nation's capital. It is appropriate that the people of Canada through their parliament and their government should have something to say about what goes on in the planning of this general area. As I say, no one quarrels with that. But from that position the National Capital Commission seems to have evolved in a way which, as both previous speakers have pointed out, includes no elected members and operates on its own self-created mandate. I believe that point has been made today by the two members from Ottawa who have already spoken and who deserve our full support. I hope they will stick with it, and that other members from the Ottawa area as well as some of us who have spent quite a few years in the Ottawa area will also continue to do so.

Having said that, I have no desire to prevent others from speaking or to contribute to the talking out of this motion; I would like to see it carried. I realize there is a problem of whether we want a special committee or a standing committee, that some negotiations may have to take place, but I hope the opinion of the House this afternoon will be clearly in favour, as I say, of the democratization of the running of the National Capital Commission.

While I am on my feet, may I say that I know there is hardly anybody in the House who does not know what is on my mind, but I want to say again that I greatly deplore the lack of planning that has resulted in this cluster of high rise structures in one part of this city. I have often spoken about this from the point of view of one who lives a few miles away and can still see the Peace Tower from my bedroom window out on Commanche Drive. Woe betide the developer who happens to put a highrise building between me and the Peace Tower!

I have spoken about this from the viewpoint of those who are on the ground. There are areas in many parts of the city where one used to be able to see the Peace Tower when driving around, but now in most areas it is blocked out. A couple of times lately, when flying in and out of the city I have had a particularly good view of the place. Usually my flights in and out of the city are over Parkwood Hills and Kanata and on we go; we come in on that same runway time and time again. But a couple of times lately on clear days the plane has circled around to the east and we have been able to see the whole of the city at once. It hits me between the eyes when I look down and see those clusters of highrise buildings all in one place. They should at least have been spread out. Some are in the suburbs but most are right in the centre of the city, and unfortunately, it is creating a core which is an eyesore and which does not make any sense. Indeed, from the air one can hardly see the Peace Tower, because of all the other high structures. I think it is contrary to the whole idea expressed by the hon. member for Ottawa West that this is the nation's