

*Suggested Lack of Urban Policy*

tions of Europe and North America. That social revolution is the increasing trend away from a rural society and toward an urban society. The motion does not condemn the government for trying and failing; we only wish that we had seen that much action. Rather, it condemns the government for doing nothing in the face of impending disaster.

Politicians have traditionally employed hyperbole to make their points. Accordingly, there may be an inclination on the part of some to see in my use of the term "impending disaster" merely another exercise in exaggeration. But it is not, Mr. Speaker. I submit that the words are well considered and that they accurately describe the developing situation in Canada.

What kind of society will be produced if the present unplanned, unregulated expansion of our cities goes on unchecked? What kind of citizen will emerge from the pollution-shrouded, traffic-choked, noise-battered concrete mazes of frenetic activity we are pleased to call cities? How long can men remain sane when they can never escape from their neighbours, when they never know silence and when any attempt at recreation must necessarily be preceded and followed by a nerve-jangling journey on inadequate traffic arteries? What kind of Canadians are we going to produce?

Well, we know that if the current rate of increase of noise levels in urban areas continues unchecked, most of the children born today will suffer severe hearing disabilities by the time they are 25. We know that one in every ten children born in Canada today will suffer emotional disturbance of sufficient seriousness to demand treatment. We know that one in every two physical ailments of present-day Canadians is the result of, or related to, psychological factors. We have seen the cities of our neighbour to the south convulsed with riots and criminal violence, and we can see signs of similar developments in Canada's urban centres.

In the face of this kind of evidence I simply cannot understand why the government does not act; nor, it is becoming increasingly obvious, can many of the government members much longer tolerate the current inaction without feeling the anger of the electorate. One minister has resigned and another member has left the Liberal caucus over matters related to this topic. I would suggest that more urban Liberal members devote some

thought to similar action if they hope to see this chamber again after the next general election.

What we in the New Democratic Party are calling for is an over-all program of development for this country which will take into account current demographic trends toward the concentration of larger and larger numbers of people into already crowded urban centres. We are saying that we need a policy decision on whether we shall continue to concentrate our industry and our population or whether we shall employ the means that modern technology has placed at our disposal to encourage the decentralization of population and the consequent re-creation of communities of human scale.

We are demanding intelligent and comprehensive policies for land use that will, for example, stop the gobbling up of irreplaceable arable land for factory sites and suburban sprawl. We are asking, for example, that the government examine the potentialities of developing areas in and around our cities for agricultural commodities requiring intensive cultivation, thereby providing our cities with ready supplies of locally produced foodstuffs and at the same time creating green belts which will provide some beauty for city dwellers and also break up the industrial concentration which contributes so markedly to our pollution problems. We are, by inference, in this resolution asking why a government which saw the need for creating green belts and recreation areas, the need for devoting attention to the human requirement for beauty, peace and surroundings of human dimensions at a world's fair, Expo '67, where people spent only portions of their day, cannot see the need for similar amenities in the cities where most of our people spend all their lives.

In his remarks earlier, the hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour (Mr. Perrault) as usual missed the point. I might say that on that basis alone he should qualify for a cabinet post in this government. He has charged that the NDP wants less money spent on our cities, less attention devoted to their problems. Rather, the passage which he quoted demands an end to the panicky patching-up of crisis situations which characterizes the present government. It demands the development of a rational, coherent approach to the problems associated with urbanization. It is the absence of such an approach which the motion before us condemns.