

*Urban Affairs—Budget Forecast*

United Nations Conference and Exposition on Human Settlements which will be held in Vancouver from May 31 to June 11 of that year. Canada has the key role to play in making this conference and exposition a success. Hon. members will recall that on March 19 of this year the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Basford) informed the House that the conference and exposition would be the largest international conference ever staged in Canada. It is anticipated that some 4,000 participants from approximately 130 countries will be coming to this event.

The Ministry of State for Urban Affairs is responsible for developing and co-ordinating Canadian participation in the conference and exposition. The choice of this particular ministry to spearhead Canadian participation is indeed a wise one, and as my hon. friend from Laprairie (Mr. Watson) has just pointed out, the ministry has established and is strengthening those intergovernmental relationships which will be so necessary for the success of this United Nations event, which in my view ranks higher than the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in regard to its long-term significance for human progress. Obviously, the full co-operation of the provinces, of the municipalities and indeed of all Canadians will be needed to bring this particular conference and exposition through to a successful conclusion.

Canada will learn from this conference and exposition. Because urban growth is a universal phenomenon, and because urban growth issues are present in every nation, we can expect an outpouring of ideas, of talent, of communication, all of which will help us and the department, of course, as well as other countries, to meet this situation. Indeed, this event will offer Canada improved means of controlling and guiding its urban growth which threatens as well as promises so much. In turn, many Canadian initiatives and projects will be useful abroad.

I said that the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs was the correct choice to head Canadian participation. Let me briefly outline what it has been doing. Consultations and meetings have been held with the provinces and departmental officials have been in close contact with the staff of the United Nations Environmental Program to work out the myriad details connected with staging such an event. Last May the urban affairs ministry, on behalf of Canada, acted as host for a United Nations seminar which met in Vancouver to begin the arduous task of drafting the agenda for the discussions in 1976 and the criteria for the demonstration projects that will illustrate solutions to problems of human settlements. This seminar drew invited urban experts from over 30 countries. It is significant to note that for the first time East Germany took part in a United Nations consultation on the environment and that the Chinese People's Republic sent official observers.

Moreover, the countries represented were from both developed and developing regions. The experts also met with Mr. Maurice Strong, who is well known to all members of the House and to most Canadians and who is, of course, the executive director of the United Nations Environmental Program. They also met with his staff, with representatives of the Government of Canada, with staff of the United Nations Centre for Housing, Building and Planning, and with representatives of the United Nations

[Mr. Stewart (Okanagan-Kootenay).]

economic commissions. This seminar of experts was chaired by Lady Robert Jackson, better known to hon. members as Barbara Ward. Lady Jackson is indefatigable in her efforts to gain world recognition of the crisis posed by urban growth, and her presence and vital leadership injected the experts' seminar with a sense of urgency which this challenge demands. This same sense of urgency underlines the programs of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs as it attempts to grapple with the many complex issues which constitute the urban growth challenge in this country of ours.

Just recently, in the *Montreal Star*, a Reuters dispatch reported that city life in Japan would collapse totally if current migration to urban areas continued unabated for another decade. Japan's economic planning agency has urged emergency measures to head off this catastrophe. Among its suggestions is one calling for removal of the capital from Tokyo. The planning agency has predicted that if present trends continue, living conditions in Japan's cities will be miserable by 1985. The housing shortage will be even more acute. Pollution will be much worse. Traffic jams will be monumental. Garbage will start to pile up in the streets. Water will be in short supply. This refers to Japan, not Canada, Mr. Speaker. But the same problems, of lesser degree, also challenge Canadian governments. That is why the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs has shaped its policy and research program to attack these problems and to support the policies and strategies of the provinces in attacking them also.

● (1750)

The urban experts at the United Nations seminar in Vancouver chose six tentative themes for the conference and exposition. But as they themselves recognized, the six overlap because the problems of human settlements are the problems of urbanization, of the continuing process of urban growth. They overlap; they contain elements of each other. They cannot be separated because what we are dealing with throughout the world and what the urban affairs ministry is tackling here in Canada is the question of how people can live better in the built-in environment—better, not just in physical terms, in terms of health, but in terms of cultural and social and other expectations. The dimensions of the problem were fully recognized by the experts, Mr. Speaker, as they are by the urban affairs ministry.

Urban settlements are growing at twice the rate of present world population growth. With that rate of growth, problems inevitably grow at an increasingly faster rate. One can hardly fail to recognize that the one, single challenge that unites all nations is how to improve the human environment. The shift from a rural to an urbanized society is world wide. Overcrowding, pollution, hard-pressed facilities are common to urban communities throughout the world. But the real difference is one of degree not of kind.

In the next 25 years, we have been warned, our urban society will be confronted with pressures of greater degree than ever before in human history. "Vancouver '76" is being held by the United Nations because of those pressures, Mr. Speaker. But the problems and the conference-exposition, provide an opportunity for all nations to join together to overcome the problems of urban growth, to