

*National Capital Commission*

If this bill becomes the law of the land I hope we shall be able more effectively to continue the concept of successive prime ministers and parliaments since 1926, whose general desire was to assure that the capital city of our country shall be one that will be a pride to all Canadians and will become an ever-increasing mecca to Canadians. They will be able to see here a symbol of the nation's greatness, a capital so constituted and so planned as to quicken the pulses of Canadians in the pride of Canadian achievement, a capital that will give to Canadians the inspiration that comes from the arts, a capital that will epitomize the principles upon which this nation is founded. In short, we hope we shall achieve in the city of Ottawa, as well as in the contribution being made to the national district plan by the city of Hull, the surrounding areas of Hull and Ottawa, a city which will be a monument to the national unity of our country, to the greatness of our past and to the vast potentialities of our future.

In this city I would like to see a retention of the monuments of our past. It is too late now to raise this matter, but I do so merely by way of illustration of the kind of thing that I hope will be discountenanced by Canadians in this and in future generations. I refer to the destruction of the old supreme court building. I feel that that building, with all its tradition, should have been preserved, not in the location in which it was, if change made removal necessary, but in some part of this city. I doubt whether anywhere in the world there could have been found such a monument to jurisprudence and to the orderly interpretation of our constitution as that building represented; for in that building successive prime ministers of Canada had argued their cases. At least seven of the 13 prime ministers of Canada at one time or another appeared in that court in that building.

I cannot think of any other building in this nation which was more representative of the history of this country and which contributed more to the building of our national traditions in jurisprudence than that building. It went its way in April and May of 1957. Criticism today of its removal has no place. My hope is that in the days ahead Canadians, not only in the city of Ottawa but everywhere in Canada, will display an interest in their historical past and will take measures in addition to those which have been taken in the past, great as they have been, in connection with the work of the historical monuments society, to the end that those devices which have in their custody the traditions and history of our past shall not lightly be removed and be forgotten.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

The planning that was done in the past by Mr. King, Mr. Bennett and Mr. St. Laurent had a greater, more profound and majestic concept of a national capital. One of those contributions to which all of us can pay our tribute and at the same time on this occasion do our part to bring about is to see that their traditions and their ideas of this great capital city will become in greater measure than has been so in the past the dedication of Canadians as a whole. It is in that spirit that I open the discussion on this question, which somewhat more than most legislation introduced in the house is of the spirit that one must never forget that the greatest impetus and inspiration for a great future of a country are the profound and great past.

There is nothing more inspiring to succeeding generations than to be able to look back on the monuments of their nation, on the achievements of their national capital. No nation can look forward to a great future without having behind it an illustrious past, whether within that nation or in consequence of tradition and heritage. I hope that hon. members generally will be able to support the resolution. When the bill is introduced fuller and more complete details will, of course, be available as to the changes that have been made, which cannot be discussed now in committee.

**Mr. Pearson:** Mr. Chairman, in rising to speak to the resolution I do not propose at this time to follow the Prime Minister on the subject of the desirability or otherwise of having torn down the old supreme court building because for one thing I do not think that matter is affected by the terms of this resolution. But I do agree with him that a country which has before it such a great future should be very careful to preserve the monuments of its past, not only in Ottawa but wherever those monuments may be in our country.

This, Mr. Chairman, is the second measure we have considered this morning which should be and I think is of a non-partisan and non-controversial character, concerning as it does a resolution which is important to all of us and to all Canadians in its bearings on the "development and improvement", to quote the words of the resolution, of the national capital plan. We know that the plan and the ideas and the vision behind it go back a good many years to the time when Jacques Greber was appointed. He and his associates under previous governments initiated and assisted in the development of the plan over the years. It was a plan that was very close to the heart, mind and interest of Mr. Mackenzie King when he was prime minister. In fact he took almost a fatherly