

The Address—Mr. Stevens

colleagues. At a later date I hope to speak further on these matters and on the staggering personal income tax load that the Trudeau Liberal government has inflicted on Canadians. This is a load which, when we as individuals have finished paying our 1973 taxes, will mean that Canadians, in the aggregate, in the last five years that Trudeau has ruled this country will have paid more in personal income taxes than was paid in the previous 100 years by all Canadian individuals.

Today, however, I would like to go further in exploring the present government's activity with respect to urban affairs. This is an area where perhaps the Trudeau government is poorly fitted to serve, in that it is a field where people do not understand political orientations. They demand and expect results. The average person believes that he is entitled to adequate transportation to and from work. He believes he is entitled to a reasonably priced home in the type of community where he and his family will benefit from suitable educational, recreational and sociological facilities. In obtaining these objectives he is not interested in becoming bogged down in political foreplay. The legal red tape of federal, provincial and municipal jurisdictions in this area does not concern or affect the average man. He knows only what he sees. He respects concrete proof of government action rather than intangible, abstract promises. To date, however, the Liberal government has given us a large ration of such promises. It has shown little leadership in this field, and I am indeed fearful that the recent jockeying of cabinet posts, with two ministers new to their portfolios attempting to cope with the questions of urban affairs and urban transportation, does not augur well for the future urban dweller in our country.

• (1520)

This is a field of great challenge. It is a field where the federal government could take a lead and do dramatic things which would be well received in this country. The Department of Urban Affairs was formed in 1971 with great expectations. The cost of housing in Canada had become prohibitive. Between 1961 and 1971, lot values increased by 139 per cent in Toronto; in Ottawa they increased by 147 per cent, in Hamilton by 177 per cent, and in the metropolitan Toronto development fringe they shot up by 194 per cent.

No other area on this continent has suffered such an increase in land values. Translated into human terms, which the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) says is all that he is concerned with, we find that the average new NHA bungalow in the Toronto area sold for \$17,368 in 1961 and could be carried with a minimum annual income of \$5,284. Today, however, the average new, detached house in the fringe area of metropolitan Toronto sells for \$42,146 and requires an annual income of \$16,623 to carry it. The Minister of Finance may not like to deal with statistics, but I assure him these rising shelter costs constitute a human tragedy in our country. The Ministry of State for Urban Affairs has not improved the matter to date. Based on this morning's Statistics Canada figures, we find shelter costs have risen by 6.3 per cent since December, 1971, and they rose by .7 per cent in December alone.

The throne speech itself, and the speech yesterday of the Minister of State for Urban Affairs were much better

in form and presentation than in substance. The Minister of State for Urban Affairs is most eloquent when he deals with planning, with conferences and with matters which generally speaking are not wholly within his jurisdiction. But on matters more clearly within his jurisdiction, or those in the jurisdiction of the Minister of Transport, we find that both ministers and the throne speech are much less specific concerning what action is planned to improve urban conditions in this country.

Therefore, let me be specific for the benefit of these two ministers and the government. The one-quarter to one-half billion dollars the government plans to spend on the second Toronto airport would be better spent improving urban transportation in the Toronto-centred region. To be more specific, one-quarter of a billion dollars would be the amount of money, roughly, required to cover the entire capital cost of bringing in sufficient commuter train equipment to service 200,000 commuters per day in the Toronto area. I would suggest this would be a much more worthwhile expenditure for the people who live in the Toronto area than the proposed Toronto airport expenditure.

I would also emphasize that if either of the two ministers to whom I have referred had to cope with traffic on the Don Valley expressway and sit for an hour or an hour and a half bumper-to-bumper with little to see other than the little used CNR trackage beside this expressway, there is no doubt that their priorities would change very quickly. There would be better co-operation in respect of the urban matters to which I have referred.

I suggest that the government should in due course appoint a standing committee on urban affairs and housing in order that these matters could be looked into in much greater depth. I would also suggest that innovative ideas should be brought in and an attempt made to try to break the traffic congestion which exists in so many of our urban areas. In this respect I would suggest they at least consider such things as self-drive taxis. This new, slightly unorthodox transit system was recently installed in Montpelier, southern France. The self-drive taxi is an extremely simple proposal to end traffic congestion in downtown areas. The motorist pays a joining fee of approximately \$75; with this retainer fee he is entitled to use a fleet of computerized, self-drive cars.

The basic idea is that the motorist drives his car into the centre of town on a high-speed highway, such as Ottawa's Queensway. At each central exit is a parking lot, where he leaves his own car and drives to work in the self-drive taxi which he can later leave at any one of certain specified parking places. He goes home in the same manner. The great advantage to the motorist is the fact that, although the initial principle of self-drive cars is similar to that of a taxi, once the retainer fee is paid the service is cheaper than that of a taxi. The organizers estimate that one self-drive taxi replaces 15 or 20 cars, thus eliminating the major cause of downtown traffic congestion. I mention this simply as an example of the type of innovative measures the Department of Urban Affairs could take in an attempt to relieve traffic congestion in our urban areas.

To this end, I propose to introduce a private member's bill dealing with the establishment of a national urban transportation authority. We believe, and I certainly do,