

National Capital Commission

the big expenditures have been incurred. It is now a matter of developing the driveway itself. I am very keen that this should be done. I think the timing is right now to proceed. When there was a post-war housing shortage it was not desirable to go into the area and evict people for a development of this kind and the expropriations took somewhat longer than normal for that reason. They have now been completed and I would hope it would be possible to get on with the project.

Work also requires to be done to develop the driveway system along the south and southeast shore of the Rideau river. I hope that project will be among those undertaken at an early date. Then there is the matter of expropriations in the Sussex street area. I would hope it would also be possible to develop that project rapidly. The sites I am talking about so arouse my enthusiasm that I find it difficult to use moderate language in describing them. I hope that among hon. members there are those who like to walk or, indeed, to drive if they must drive, on those days when we are not fully engaged here and who will examine the areas about which I am talking for themselves. If they do I think they will share my enthusiasm for the site chosen by our forebears as the national capital of Canada. I hope that in the years to come the commission we are now establishing and its successors will continue the good work so very well undertaken by the Ottawa improvement commission and the federal district commission.

Mr. Martineau: Mr. Chairman, it is indeed expedient that this committee should consider the adoption of this resolution which provides for the improvement and enlargement of the national capital area. I should like to congratulate the Prime Minister particularly on his initiative and I am sure, as hon. members who have spoken so far have indicated, that in this undertaking he has the unanimous support of members on both sides of the house. While at this stage we are planning for the future greatness of our capital city, I believe it is not entirely uninteresting or inappropriate to look back into the past to see how our capital city has evolved from a very humble beginning and how its development has been influenced by a multitude of chances and events that none could have foreseen.

This site, of which some members have spoken so eloquently and which today is the site of our great capital, was known for unrecorded centuries by succeeding tribes of Indians who travelled the majestic river of which we are so proud, a river that in the days of the Indians was known as the Grand

river and in Indian bore the name Kit-chi-ssippi. For many centuries before the dawn of the history of North America the Indians looked at these cliffs and hills and certainly they never thought that some day the great capital city of a growing power would be situated on these hills.

To come closer to our own time, we are familiar with the voyages of Samuel de Champlain who bivouacked not far from here and who, indeed, was the first to note in his records the natural phenomenon of a spray or curtain from which the name of the Rideau river originated. It is in memory of his journeys that on Nepean point in this city we have a bronze statue to that great explorer and founder of New France and of Canada. After Champlain there followed wave upon wave of explorers, traders and missionaries who knew the Ottawa river and who also no doubt admired the wonderful scenery presented by what is now the hill of parliament.

Later, military men surveyed the sites and in 1791 the legislature of Canada recommended the forks of the Ottawa and Rideau rivers as the site of a future military fort or a fortified city. Then came the Napoleonic wars and the American revolutionary war, and as a result the Ottawa river area became known as a great source for white pine timber. It was truly this quest for timber that opened up the Ottawa valley, and it was the succeeding generations of lumbermen, lumberjacks and farmers that opened up this valley.

After the union of the two Canadas, Mr. Chairman, Ottawa came, by mere chance I would say, as a result of the bickering of other cities, older and more famous, who claimed to have a greater right to become the capital city of the new nation that was to be born, to be chosen as the capital city. It is interesting to read from the proclamation of Queen Victoria on December 31, 1857, with reference to Bytown:

—as in the judgment of Her Majesty, combining more advantages than any other place in Canada for the permanent seat of the future government.

Indeed, when Queen Victoria fixed her choice on Ottawa as the future capital many of the inhabitants of the older cities of Canada sneered. As a matter of fact, a certain gentleman from Toronto, who was known as a gentleman philosopher, commented that this sub-Arctic lumber village was suddenly converted, by royal mandate, into a political cockpit. Despite the unpopularity of the choice of Ottawa, nevertheless in 1860 the then Prince of Wales, who afterwards became King Edward VII, laid the cornerstone of the new parliament buildings of the nation of Upper and Lower