

*Alleged Failure to Cope With Urban Growth*

name them—are among the real victims and are not the causes of inflation. Decent human housing for these people in the richer provinces cannot be postponed even in the cause of the anti-inflationary fight. The minister must clear up immediately the uncertainty surrounding the whole question of urban renewal, with which I have concerned myself since I was elected to parliament and had the nerve to stand up and say something. I have pursued it with vigour and I hope with responsibility. I hope the minister will clear up the uncertainty surrounding urban renewal because if he does not the effect could be disastrous. The minister was begged to do so by the Canadian Association of Mayors and Municipalities in their brief of April 21, 1969. This association, whose members have to face the problems of deterioration of the older sections of our cities, stated that the real problem was “the absence of any clear directives regarding urban renewal schemes”. The brief continued:

It is essential that the new urban renewal policy be defined and announced without further delay so as to enable the many concerned municipalities to amend schemes where possible and to proceed with implementation.

Action is being called for, but where is the action? When it comes to action, for the life of me I cannot understand why the government is hesitant to proclaim, institute, initiate and bring forth a separate ministry of housing and urban development. When we think of what I originally stated, that in another 20 years some 80 per cent or 90 per cent of our people will live in urban centres, surely we must wonder how anyone can state in 1969 that such a ministry is not required at this time. Such a ministry would set priorities, would determine involvement, would agree to guidelines and would separate jurisdictional functions, at the same time working together with the several provinces and the municipalities in order to come up with concrete answers to the very complex problems which are the result of urban expansion.

● (3:50 p.m.)

All I hope is that when the minister makes up his mind about urban renewal he will not forget the poor or exclude them. Regardless of the fact that Ontario may be one of the rich provinces, there are many poor people in Ontario and in all the large cities who demand and need attention. These people belong to the new era, the era of concern and social awareness. In their awareness they are also concerned about transportation.

[Mr. Alexander.]

Transportation is another area in which the federal government could take a leading role, just as I have said that the government must give leadership in meeting the challenge of urban growth. Our cities are truly communities in motion. The federal government could exercise a strong influence on the pattern of growth of our urban centres through its transportation policy and through the exercise of its regulatory powers in the development of waterways, ports, airports, pipelines, etc.

The activities of such Crown corporations as Air Canada and Canadian National Railways are also crucial. I was glad to hear the former Prime Minister direct a question to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) about the inconvenience and frustration resulting from inadequate service on the part of Canadian National Railways. Many people are desirous of taking holidays in our beautiful western provinces. They are told that they must make their reservations a year in advance, which seems ridiculous, or that there is not enough service to accommodate the people who want to go.

A transportation policy could be a potent tool in the guiding and planning of urban growth. With all due respect to the Minister without Portfolio in charge of housing, I think he had better start talking about transportation with his colleagues in terms of giving it priority because the need will develop as urban growth develops. As I said earlier, too often the government has simply adopted a policy to fit the uncontrolled and unplanned urban sprawl. I want to give the government a little hint. We had the good fortune to be involved a while ago with men from the United States. They were talking about their great megalopolises and what transportation problems mean to these great cities of the future. It is their humble opinion that transportation should be of prime concern to government.

At one point it appeared as though there might be some hope in respect of the transportation problems of our cities. They are important, and I cannot understand why the government always says that transportation is a provincial matter. The Task Force on Housing and Urban Development, composed of individuals with competence and intelligence, travelled throughout the country and after much deliberation came up with certain conclusions. One of them was:

The federal government should encourage and co-ordinate a broad program of practical research into urban transportation problems and consider,