

process will more accurately reflect viewpoints and there will be a greater section of society more responsive to this kind of leadership.

The technocrats have had their way in the parliamentary process for too long. It is time for a new kind of political leadership based on a declaration of value openly arrived at, and that entails bringing some philosophical beliefs concerning key moral issues on to the floor of the House of Commons. It is not just a matter of finding immediate answers to problems, but of examining the horizon of where we are headed. As we turn to the horizon today we see the dignity of man and his most basic rights threatened increasingly. Prophetic voices are needed, and parliament should be a great amplifier.

I believe that it would be a constructive act for us to establish a special committee of this House assigned to the task of listening to the needs of Canada in the way I have outlined. I must point out that I am not alone in my thinking. On February 11 the Minister of Finance (Mr. Macdonald) proposed the appointment of a special committee to consider and report upon the government document entitled "The Way Ahead". However, the committee I envisage would do more than study our economic future. We ought to be concerned, as I have said, about other facets of society that all intermesh and that are woven into the fabric of Canada. It is the full range of economic, social, scientific and constitutional factors that should be examined.

● (1710)

The Science Council also believes that some mechanism must be created to assure public input into public policies, to assure that the public good is represented in government decision-making, and to assure that this fragmented society becomes one of consensus. Senator Maurice Lamontagne advocates forming a separate government agency called Horizons Canada to stimulate discussion of Canada's future. But why set up a new body? Why cannot parliament fill this role through the creation of a special committee?

The hon. member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray) has asserted his belief that the definition of choices and goals for Canada to adopt in the post-control period certainly should not be done only by some planning group working confidentially within the government. His proposal is to set up a special parliamentary committee on national goals. It is worth noting that this committee as envisaged by the hon. member would not be restricted to economic issues. He points out that there should be attention given in the committee's work to the question of whether the country's policy emphasis should be on economic growth or on improving the quality of life.

A similar view is held by the Gamma group of Montreal, organized with federal funding to study the concept of a conserver society. In its final report the group proposed as its first of four major recommendations that a public debate should be initiated in order to elicit reactions from different pressure groups concerning the desirability of a conserver society. Such an inquiry should not be open only to those who

Economic and Social Development

have been organized into pressure groups; it should be carried out by a parliamentary committee.

In "The Way Ahead for Canada", subtitled "A Paperback Referendum", the editor, Robert Logan, has devised a novel means of allowing public input in government policy. Readers are invited to fill out a questionnaire at the back and mail it to the Prime Minister's office. Professor Logan believes it important that all people have some input into future policies, and sees this unique poll as a first step. It is significant that the scope of the questionnaire is wider than that of the government working paper and that Professor Logan wants parliament to have a major role in determining what Canadians want as their future.

In asking members to support my motion, I suggest that Professor Logan's book contains many reasons for their doing so. Here are a few quotations, the first from the futurologist Alvin Toffler who says:

Unless we are able to reconnect citizens with the political decision system, unless we can create many new and sensitive channels for feedback between people and their governments, we will not be able to solve our economic and social problems. For even more fundamental than specific government programmes, are the processes by which we arrive at them.

This next is from the distinguished hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies) who says:

Economic policy-making in Canada has been poor in recent years because it has been so totally closed. The senior officials in the Department of Finance and the Bank of Canada set the policy directions of the nation. The results have demonstrated that this is not an adequate system. Economic policy is so important that instead of being made in secret, it should be a matter of public debate.

The third is from Bruce McLeod, former moderator of the United Church of Canada, who says:

If it is important that Québécois determine their own destiny and not be made into Albertans, or vice versa, it is possible to argue that without the struggles and disagreements within a fellowship that includes both, neither would easily achieve an undistorted self-understanding appropriate to this end of the twentieth century. Structures that divide us and keep us separate and unexposed to those who think and act differently, do not necessarily ensure our own growth, let alone our responsible participation in the building of the earth of which we are a part. What is needed is a model of federalism in which diversity is expected and protected, but in which doors are opened between narrow circles and unity is forthrightly declared.

I agree with Professor Logan when he says that although decisions are best made by elected representatives, our present system of government could be vastly improved if more meaningful input could come from the people.

Mr. Speaker, I turn briefly now to some of the chief areas of my concern about the next decade and why I am reluctant to see policy formed only on the basis of narrow opinions, no matter how expertly couched. I take, as my first example, immigration. Surely the immigration debate which is still going on reflects the diversity of views among Canadians brought out by the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration. What worries me is that in the formation of policy undue weight may be given to special bodies such as, for example, the Science Council of Canada which has come out strongly for a low-population, high-technology future for Canada without, at the same time, redressing present dispari-