

*National Capital Commission*

remuneration. Through this mechanism the viewpoints of various groups in the community can be put forward on a continuing basis.

I have always believed there should be much greater input from elected representatives whether of this House or of other governments. It seems to me that if the people have chosen certain individuals to represent them, those individuals should be given the opportunity to express their points of view on the governing of the national capital as well as with regard to other matters coming within their mandate.

I commend the hon. member for bringing this subject before us for debate. It could be said, as was said by the hon. member for Restigouche, that this is the kind of subject we should be discussing in committee. But what is wrong with bringing it into the House as well? It does not interfere with the work of the committee in any way. In fact it might have a beneficial effect in calling the attention of more people to the importance of what is going on in the national capital committee. It is not the kind of motion to which one says yea or nay, and for this reason I do not know whether it would do a great deal of good if it were to come to a vote. But whether we agree with everything in the motion or not, we should all realize that a body such as the national capital commission has got to be accountable to the elected people one way or another. And evidence has come before us to show that certainly in the past this has not been the case.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Stewart (Cochrane):** Hon. members on both sides, I am sure, will agree with that. I would certainly like to see this subject pursued further, if not here, then in our committee. Let us examine it more deeply and try to produce a formula which will please the various points of view. I know there are some who think we should establish a federal district independent of the provinces. Then there is a whole range of opinions, even those who favour maintaining the status quo. Surely there must be some way in which we could find a compromise which would be satisfactory to the majority so that a more efficient way of running the national capital is found.

It seems to me that with the numbers of governments presently involved it is not possible to have a smooth running capital, an opinion which coincides with that of Mr. Fullerton who in his study said that we are overgoverned. It is time we found a way of cutting down the number of governments involved. Some sort of consultative process is the answer. I always find it amazing that when a meeting is held and a decision is taken with only half the members present, those who are absent are upset about it. But if the same decision is made with all the members present, they are all happy about it. This simply means that people like to be consulted. They want to be able to make their contribution. This is true of the national capital committee just as it is of an other committee or organization.

I commend this to you, Mr. Speaker—that the motion presented by the hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton be accept-

[Mr. Stewart (Cochrane).]

ed and that we refer the content of it to the special committee so that we, in committee, may get on with the job.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Frank Maine (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works):** Mr. Speaker, in response to some of the issues raised by the hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton (Mrs. Pigott) on January 30, 1978, may I say that I understand she has received an extensive briefing by the staff of the commission. I should like to point out that conditions in the so-called work ghettos supposedly created by the federal government are improving daily, in particular in the Hull area where the opening of the Place du Centre and of the skating rink at Place du Portage greatly humanized the downtown area.

● (1752)

The National Capital Commission has made a major effort to respond to the concerns expressed by the Auditor General. As to the perceived differences between the planning proposals of the regional municipalities and those of the National Capital Commission, it has become clear that many potential issues have disappeared because of the changed growth prospects for the area. Now we know the capital area will not grow as rapidly as in the past. Continuity of the National Capital Commission management has been provided in part by the composition of its advisory committee on planning, design and property with Canada-wide representation.

I should like to reply to several aspects raised in the motion by outlining the accountability of the National Capital Commission, thereby refuting the suggestion that it is not sufficiently accountable. The National Capital Commission is, under the terms of the National Capital Act, the agent of the Government of Canada, charged with the responsibility to prepare plans for, and assist in, the development, conservation and improvement of the national capital region in order that the nature and character of the seat of the Government of Canada may be in accord with its national significance.

Since the NCC is not a local government, it is not directly accountable to a local electorate but, rather, is accountable through the government to parliament, which must approve the commission's capital budget.

Nation-wide input into policymaking by the NCC is ensured by its commissioners, who are chosen from every province in Canada. Strong local representation on the commission is provided by the requirement that, in addition to members from the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, at least two members be chosen from the city of Ottawa, one from the city of Hull, as well as two members from municipalities other than Ottawa and Hull within the National Capital Region.

All of the commission's significant expenditures must be approved by Treasury Board and governor in council, which ensure the strict accountability of the NCC to the government for its financial transactions.

The government's recently issued white paper on Crown corporations outlines a series of proposals which essentially