

constituents in a particular riding, that is where offices will be proposed, regardless of what is best for Canada, what is best for the office, or what is best for the citizens in that area. If this government does not soon start realizing that it has to take into consideration what is best for Canada and not what is best for government members personally, then we will have bad government. We have bad government today because of pork-barrelling and the decentralization of offices all over the Dominion.

I cannot support this bill because this bill is incurring more expense in the area of political patronage. I hope that the people of Canada are well aware of those three points, namely the history of these relocation moves, the costs involved in picking up the tab and the ulterior motive that motivates this government into making every decision. I say that is crass politics. Until we realize that and until we respect what is best for Canada as a government, then we lose credibility in Parliament as we carry out our duties.

This government that we have today is fully responsible for the millions of dollars wasted in the cancellation of Eldorado in Hope township and in the cancellation of Parks Canada in Peterborough just so it could serve its own needs and desires as it endeavours to serve one purpose, and that is to get re-elected individually regardless of the cost to the Canadian taxpayers.

Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, this bill that is before us today has as its basic purpose the legislation of something which was done without authority in the mid-1970s. What was done without authority was not the building of the buildings in Hull, Quebec, which someone described as Fort Fullerton, it was the movement of certain government offices out of the capital of Canada which, under the British North America Act, is Ottawa, into another part of the national capital region, that is to say the city of Hull. That is the purpose of the bill.

If members want to look at it, they will see that it deals with headquarters of the Economic Council of Canada, the land titles department, provisions with respect to the National Transportation Act, the Public Archives Act, the headquarters of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, matters with respect to the Pension Act, and so on.

This bill first saw the light of day in the Thirtieth Parliament. Despite the fact that we are now in the Thirty-second Parliament, that is not too long ago. When the government of which I had the honour to be a member came to office we had to take a look at this bill because the same illegal situation which had existed at the outset, existed for our government. We had to include this bill in our work program. It was included in the work program for the Thirty-first Parliament. But as everyone knows, that Parliament did not last long enough for this bill to be dealt with. Now we see it again in the Thirty-second Parliament. We are again trying to legalize something which occurred a long time ago.

This is a very symbolic bill, aside from its ramifications in law. It is very symbolic because it pinpoints something which occurred in the national capital area. It pinpoints the headlong

dash, without consultation with local government or even provincial government, to move departments of government from where they were and had been for some period of time within the city of Ottawa over to the city of Hull.

• (1740)

So that members of Parliament will have no doubt about my feelings with respect to the matter, let me say quite frankly that I do not begrudge the good fortune of the city of Hull with regard to this development. However, I say to the House that the government handled it in a very ham-handed, unconsultative way. As a result of how it was handled, a great deal of misunderstanding developed in the national capital area. An opportunity for consultation which should have taken place with the provincial authorities, regional government and others, did not take place until after those moves were made.

Even when there was some discussion after the fact with local government officials as to the pace of the movement of public servants to Hull into those tremendous buildings across the river, tremendous in size, and some agreement had been reached between the federal government and the local governments, that agreement was broken as well. If anyone has any doubt about that, let him speak to Dennis Coolican, then chairman of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton. He indicated the government was years ahead in terms of the movement. I do not have to tell hon. members how important that was, or about the disruption it meant to this area.

It is symbolic because it pinpoints what has been wrong for some period of time in relationships between the federal government and local governments in this area. The national capital area and the municipalities surrounding it are many things. One thing they are is a group of municipalities which gather their authority under the Ontario municipal act and related statutes. They have mandates to plan. There is land use planning to take into account, as well as demographic changes that occur, and population changes. They have the jurisdictional responsibility as to how the local municipality will develop. That is the law of the province of Ontario. I dare say it is the law of the province of Quebec as well.

The clash in this area has been that the federal government with its immense land holdings, immense financial capability, and through a combination of those things, has been able to do its own thing without consultation. This relocation occurred and we are now legalizing it. We are cleaning up the act, much as the little man who runs behind the circus parade with bucket and shovel to clean up the act after the parade has passed. This is an indication of just how wrong the government's approach has been to this whole matter.

I do not want to leave the impression that as between the staff level of the National Capital Commission and the staff level of the federal government there is no discussion that takes place, that each works in a vacuum. Within the limits of the mandate that is imposed on the respective governments, at staff level there has always been a certain amount of give and take and understanding. Somehow that has not reached the