

Municipal Revenue Sharing

X millions of dollars with which we will do it." That was in 1971. It is now 1979 and we still do not have that expanded airport. What I am saying is that at times these people recognize there is a need in terms of the urban environment and they spare no expense and no promise in terms of trying to suck the public in, and then they leave them high and dry after they have accomplished their purpose and become elected.

What disturbs me also is the fact that the hon. member for Comox-Alberni said that the federal government has no clout or legislative authority because it is the provinces which have jurisdiction over the cities—the cities are creatures of the provinces. We all know that, but we all know as well that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) would think nothing of introducing an incentive plan in order that people can purchase homes, which results in subdivisions being built, which puts a certain amount of stress on the municipal purse. He did not mention that, but that is one way to get in through the back door.

I can also tell you the same thing with respect to airports. They can build a Mirabel or a Pickering which will upset the environment in any municipality, and at times they will do that without any consultation until they are caught, at which time they will admit that they did move a little too early and that they should have consulted. So, Mr. Speaker, do not let the hon. member for Comox-Alberni con you, as I would say back in the city of Hamilton.

A few years ago—I think the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia) was with me on the joint Senate and House of Commons Committee on the Constitution, although I am not sure—I realized what an important part of our Canadian way of life were our growing cities. I was impressed with the problems I encountered. This goes back a few years. At that time we made recommendations in terms of the constitution and what it should contain regarding cities. I found out, just as did the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona, that the Task Force on National Unity had nothing to say about the growth of our cities. I am surprised about that. I received our tax bill this week. I went home feeling so happy on Friday when my wife said that the first two instalments are in. But then I became unhappy. The point is, sir, that even with Bill C-60, the bill on the constitution, we have not yet heard a word about the problems which the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona brought forward.

We must now direct our attention to the problems of the cities, and the only way we can do this is to convince the provinces. I know they are very jealous about their rights. They say, "You cannot go over us, under us, or through us, without consultation," but what is missing, I think, is the leadership which must come from the federal government.

I notice the good doctor, the hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Foster), wants to speak this evening. I do not know whether or not I will give him an opportunity to speak. What the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona is asking for is leadership by this government in bringing the parties together to see how we can solve this serious situation. We do not want to get into a partisan debate in the manner of the hon. member for

Comox-Alberni who thought that, as parliamentary secretary, this would be a marvellous chance for him to attack a member from Alberta, which he did. I was ashamed, because I have respect for that member. At times he does his job, but this time we on this side were a little disgusted to see that a parliamentary secretary would jump up in such an eager way, having forgotten that one of his leading lights, the hon. member for Westmount (Mr. Johnston), spoke only recently on October 16, I think, putting the problems of the cities before the House of Commons and his own party—

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): No, February 14.

Mr. Alexander: Yes, February 14, Valentine's Day, the day of love, understanding and compassion. The hon. member for Westmount brought in that motion, and do you know who said no, Mr. Speaker? The Liberals, as usual, said no. I suppose that is becoming a little partisan, but the fact of the matter is that the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona as well had the same idea in mind and his motion has come to the front. What do you find? You find a Liberal member who represents a thriving province who should know the problems, of, say, the city of Vancouver and of other big cities. These are problems beyond our immediate comprehension.

All we are trying to do at this time is to emphasize, re-emphasize, delineate and underscore the need that we as members of parliament must be ever aware of, the needs of our growing cities. You cannot call them, as did the hon. member, and I will paraphrase him, unwanted second cousins. That is what he attempted to do. You cannot imply, as did the hon. member, that they are not needed in the constitutional debate, that they should not be there. That is the height of irresponsibility.

I share the views and the initiative taken not only by the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona, for whom I have a great deal of respect. Also I have a great deal of respect for the hon. member for Westmount and for my good friend, the House leader of the NDP, who also seems to have the ability to put his finger on the problems. The hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert) indicated that he had more to say but that he wanted to hear the comments of the hon. member for Hamilton West who comes from a big city, faced with problems.

● (1800)

The government is thinking about introducing a centre for occupational health and safety. It is another big mess. The government is talking about establishing the office in Ottawa which, in my view, is the last place it should be. We have the expertise—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. The hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona (Mr. Roche) rises on a point of order.

Mr. Roche: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the representatives of the New Democratic Party and the Social Credit party for the responsible support they gave this motion.