

picture of the environment in which most Canadians are forced to live. It states:

• (3:40 p.m.)

Shortage and inadequacy of urban housing, traffic and transportation problems, air and water pollution, the confused jumble of conflicting land uses, decaying neighbourhoods and monotonous suburbs, urban poverty and social disgrace... these are the familiar problems to the average Canadian city dweller today.

My goodness, how can this government sit so complacently and so smugly when this picture sits smack on all fours on its doorstep? With problems like this how does the government expect the cities to cope with the continuous pressures of the next period of rapid expansion expected during the 1970's? Without concerted and co-ordinated action by the government now, the bulk of the Canadian people can only expect further deterioration in their surroundings. Concern and vision for the quality of urban life are fundamental requirements of good government. In this government we find that concern and vision seem to have been eroded by the philosophies of political theory. What does this government really do? It simply conjures up a constitutional smokescreen designed to conceal its refusal to exercise real leadership in meeting the problems generated by the Canadian urban explosion. In short, what they say is that the vast majority of the problems belong within provincial jurisdiction.

In Canada we have a federal system and each level of government must act within its legislative competence. But the constitution is no obstacle to federal initiative in these matters. The important words are initiative and leadership. The federal government is very much involved in the life of our cities right now. Through the normal exercise of its legitimate responsibilities the federal government has a very great impact on the direction of growth and change in our urban centres. Indeed, many of the crucial components of real urban planning fall within the responsibilities of the ministers opposite.

This afternoon I wish to mention a few areas of urban concern in which the federal government can, should and must be more effective. Even a brief examination of the record shows that the present government has failed to develop the areas in which it does have jurisdiction. Given this attitude of indifference, our cities may in fact be fortunate the federal government is not totally responsible for their well-being.

An announcement was made by the province of Ontario and in this regard a question

Alleged Failure to Cope With Urban Growth was asked by the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave). He asked whether the Prime Minister or the minister of housing, since the province of Ontario has given this government leadership, would look into the possibility of such a program being initiated across the country.

The largest over-all physical impact on the growth of our urban centres will be felt in the field of housing. The failure of this government to come to grips with the real issues involved in the housing crisis has been fully documented in the house by myself and other members of our party. It is obvious that a truly concerned federal government could exercise a profound influence on the growth of our cities in this field. A few comments about the possibilities for urban renewal and rehabilitation should suffice to illustrate the general unwillingness of the government to be of help to our cities. The poor of the slums and the cores of Canadian cities are still waiting for the thaw in the general freeze on public housing projects, particularly urban renewal projects. Since the political demise of the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer) the present minister has been kind enough to accede to some immediate requirements. But the general freeze is still on.

As I read the papers daily I am confused concerning what the Minister without Portfolio in charge of housing has on his mind. I was under the impression at one time he had indicated to me that a decision would be made prior to the time the house recessed for the summer holidays. Now it appears that the minister wants to travel about the country in order to re-examine and reassess the same 12 cities that have been reexamined and reassessed for the past eight months. How much more can we stand of this type of thing? The city of Hamilton, which has a commitment of some \$4 million to \$5 million with regard to its urban renewal program, and many other cities are waiting for the government to make up its mind concerning what it intends to do. The minister has said that he is thinking about the matter. At least that is a positive statement. I understand that he intends to make a statement soon. I tell the minister that the poor cannot wait much longer and that the commercial aspect is secondary.

I warn the minister that he must not succumb to pressures from any of his more complacent colleagues in this regard. He must not provide merely for the regionally selective approval of such projects. The poor of Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary and Hamilton—you