

*Suggested Lack of Urban Policy*

I do not intend tonight to comment on how we should meet the urgent and immediate problems of large centres, although others have spoken about them. We face the problems of how we should ensure that people who live in large cities are properly housed, how we should ensure adequacy of transportation systems so that life is more than misery in a large city, how we should deal with questions of pollution on a large scale and how we should deal with many social problems which arise in these huge, urban agglomerations.

The mere suggestion of these problems brings me to the next major issue, which is the question of jurisdiction in this country. Unfortunately for us, there is no authority which can make laws which govern every situation. I do not quarrel with the suggestion that has been made, that the federal government should involve itself more substantially in urban affairs. Indeed, I think that every fair-minded person in the House would admit that through the vehicle of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation and other federal agencies there has been a substantial contribution to the development of knowledge of urban affairs and to the solution of some of the graver urban problems we face.

We who live in Ottawa have recently seen how difficult it is to mesh all the various jurisdictions—municipal, regional, provincial, and in the case of this community, even federal—in order to make a sensible, coherent and positive attack on the problems of urban living. These problems do not disappear out of sight merely by someone suggesting that they should not be there; merely by someone suggesting they can be eliminated by creating a new department in the federal structure. We must realize that the total solution of urban problems in this country will require the co-operation of all the agencies of government and indeed of all the people of Canada. That leads me to my third comment, which perhaps it is presumptuous for a person like myself to make but it relates to the view we have of this country and the view we have of urban problems in general.

● (9:10 p.m.)

As I said at the beginning, we are locked in a view which we have had of our life and living for as long as all of us can remember, of this inevitable, inexorable progression into bigger urban units and into bigger cities. Some of the projections which we now hear are enough to instil stark terror into the

hearts of all of us. For example, we are told that perhaps in ten or 15 years' time more than 80 per cent of the people of Canada will live in 10 or 12 large urban units. We are told that by the end of the century 90 per cent of the population of this country may occupy only 1 per cent of its land mass.

I suggest, therefore, that when we discuss the question of urbanism and urban living we should lift our sights if we can—and I know it is difficult—beyond the problems we see at the present time. We should ask ourselves the serious question of how we can avoid these problems by better planning, by greater thinking in the future. This year there was published a report entitled, "The Sixth Annual Review. A Commentary by B. W. Wilkinson," on the sixth report of the Economic Council of Canada. He is a professor at the University of Alberta. Among other things he deals with the question of urban development and urban growth. I quote from page 31 of Professor Wilkinson's pamphlet, as follows:

Urban development is another area which, according to the *Review*, is to capture a major portion of government outlays in the future. The council's projections are based on its belief, developed more fully in the *Fourth Review*, that an ever-growing percentage of our population is going to be concentrated in larger and larger cities. The council calls for expenditures to prevent the quality of life in the cities from deteriorating because of the many problems that mere size creates.

In the *Fourth Review*, the council dismissed in one short paragraph the possibility that a reasonable economic and social alternative to the greatly enlarged outlays required for coping with the tremendous economic and social *diseconomies* arising from giant metropolises is to limit the size of cities. The core of the council's argument was that we do not know why cities grow and therefore cannot take steps to regulate or control their growth. Is it better to undertake the research and the tremendous costs necessary to make cities liveable than to research the alternative of controlling city size? I cannot accept this conclusion.

I suggest that as a nation we face this rather mind-shattering problem of trying to determine why cities grow, of trying to find out how we can limit their growth and how we can direct their growth in a way which will make this country in the future a much better place for our children and our children's children. If we keep on going as we are today we are not faced with the creation of cities of the size of Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver or even Ottawa, but we are staring in the face the creation of great metropolises like New York and Chicago and the other large centres in the United States whose problems are well known to us all.