

National Capital Commission

reasons we are aware of, construction has yet to start. Again on Thursday, the Minister of State for Urban affairs, the hon. member for Papineau (Mr. Ouellet), assured the Quebec Outaouais population that the federal government is still willing to help finance the construction of a sewage treatment plant. We know also that work has started on the regional main that will run from Aylmer to the plant at Templeton.

I mentioned that several witnesses appeared before the special joint committee for the national capital area. Mr. Gallant, who at that time was chairman of the National Capital Region, had tabled a document on the capital in the future. At that time it was considered a working paper. I for one opposed the development axis, on the Quebec side, being run towards the west only; other witnesses criticized the document saying the NCC seemed to concentrate its development on the two downtown centers, that is that of Ottawa and that of Hull. It seems that the NCC has since changed its mind.

Mr. Juneau, then its chairman, indicated that the main impact would be felt mainly toward the east, that is the city of Gatineau. It is understandable why I am pleased with that change of attitude. I have the honour of representing the riding of Gatineau here in the House of Commons. The most important community in that riding is the city of Gatineau. Another recommendation of the motion of the hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton advocates setting up a special joint committee. I share the views of my colleague for Hull (Mr. Isabelle) on that score. I am not in favour of a special joint committee but I would be agreeable to a new committee of the House of Commons. Or again, why not use the standing committees we already have? The National Capital Commission's experts could appear before the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs to explain their estimates or else we could refer its annual report to that committee or to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates for example.

Following an understanding between the House leaders, we could refer its annual report to one of those committees. But this should not be done when the committees are already examining estimates, but as you already know it is considered that by May 31 the estimates have already been referred back to the House. So these committees could put questions to the representatives of the National Capital Commission and even ask people from the outside, either representatives of the Outaouais regional community or representatives of the Ottawa-Carleton community to appear before them to give their point of view and explain to the members what aspects, in the actions of the National Capital Commission during the year covered by the annual report, invite criticisms.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the committee I mentioned earlier and which was established July 27, 1978 and reinstated December 13, 1977 will be back in operation. Because of events which may have been anticipated, the members of this

[Mr. Clermont.]

committee had to go to Washington to get first-hand information on the operation of the federal district of Washington. But now that things are back to normal, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the committee will start operating again, that the members who had to go to Washington will be able to attend and that we will be in a position to submit a report to Parliament. But in order to do so, Mr. Speaker, the 90-day delay for submitting a report to the House of Commons as granted under a motion will have to be extended.

● (1732)

[English]

Mrs. Jean E. Pigott (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member for Gatineau (Mr. Clermont) said that we criticized the appointments of Mr. Drury and Mr. Juneau. The point was the politicization of the role of chairman of the National Capital Commission.

Mr. Juneau is a defeated candidate. Mr. Drury was a member of this House, but he had also been appointed a northern affairs commissioner. He is turning out to be a part-time chairman of the National Capital Commission. We are concerned about the fact that 40 per cent of the land holdings in this region—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. The hon. member has already spoken on the motion, and I would like her to come to her point of order.

Mrs. Pigott: My point is that we do not criticize Mr. Drury or Mr. Juneau personally. We criticize the way this government deals with the chairmanship of the National Capital Commission.

Mr. Ralph Stewart (Cochrane): Mr. Speaker, I have been a member of this House for almost ten years, and I am amazed at how the proceedings here are carried on. In spite of many of us having tried to effect changes by making suggestions and so forth, we are still going along in the same way. I give as an example the placing of business for private members' hour. We did not know until today that this subject was going to come up. It is the same thing every day. This is the private members' hour, and we insist on saying that we will suppress a certain amount of business or jump over a certain amount of business "at the request of the government". At the request of the government be damned. This is private members' hour, not a government business hour. I wish that could be understood by those who organize the business of the House.

Here we are in the national capital and the subject of the National Capital Commission is before us. Hardly anyone is in the public galleries. If the people of this area knew we were discussing this matter, I suggest that the galleries would be full because there is great interest in this subject among the people of this area. But how would they know we are discussing this when we did not even know that? We did not know it until this afternoon.

We have an order paper, which is an agenda. Every business and organization has an agenda. Our agenda is so vague that