

National Capital

than two score municipalities, including three cities. There is also the important role played by the business communities and by community associations and groups throughout the region.

Moreover, the federal presence is not a single entity. A multitude of federal agencies, corporations and departments all exert some degree of influence on the affairs of the region and, up to now at least, have not always advanced the same policies. Among this multitude of authorities is the National Capital Commission, created in 1959 as the successor to the federal district commission to represent the national interest within the national capital region.

Through its act and programs, the commission seeks to create a capital as a national symbol for all Canadians. It does not seek to destroy or replace provincial and regional loyalties, even if that were possible. The commission undertakes works of its own, guides and co-ordinates other federal activities and assists the provinces, regional governments and municipalities in projects as varied as road networks and language instruction. Moreover, the commission is the only body with a planning responsibility for the entire national capital region.

The federal government reports to parliament on capital affairs through the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. The commission itself comprises commissions representing all the provinces and the region. May I suggest, Mr. Speaker, through you, to the minister that consideration ought to be given to enlarging the membership of that commission to include the chairman of the Ottawa-Carleton regional municipality and the Outaouais government so that they can be continuously represented on that most important body.

There was a federal-provincial conference in 1969 at which a declaration was made that a national capital region would be formed. With that concept, and with the progress that has been made since then in the national capital region, I do agree: I do not wish at this time to inject any degree of partiality into what has been up to now unanimous agreement. However, I would say that section 16 of the British North America Act provides that Ottawa is the capital of Canada. I think that these two concepts can be readily and easily married together so that we can advance and continue to improve both the north bank and the south bank of the national capital region and continue to live in harmony to the benefit of both sides of the river.

The NCC was directed to help develop the national capital so that it would be a symbol of Canada's cultural and linguistic values, an efficient and aesthetically satisfying place in which to carry out the nation's business, and a model for urban planning and development that would benefit the country and be a source of pride for Canadians.

● (1710)

In short, what is required in a much broader horizon than tending the grounds of Parliament Hill, building parkways or even relocating the railways and acquiring the greenbelt. Implementation of the new policy has meant a massive injection of federal funds into Hull in this decade, but at the same time expenditures on national

[Mr. Poulin.]

capital projects on the Ontario side of the region have been maintained.

Provincial and regional government planning in the capital area has changed the relative position of the federal government in its development plans. This increased activity by other levels of government, that is, provincial and municipal governments on both sides of the Ottawa River, has required the federal authority to place increasing reliance upon persuasion and indirect strategies, through its use of federally-owned land, for instance, to implement its policies and planning objectives. The result is a growing discrepancy between the responsibilities of the federal government and its capacity to act effectively to carry them out. But this does demonstrate that it is timely and essential that a fresh basis of consensus be reached to guide governments to a common goal for the national capital region. It is my belief that the National Capital Commission should be the chief planner in general, and in particular for the expansion in federal planning on both sides of the Ottawa River, always in co-operation and in co-ordination with the regional governments and municipalities on both sides.

The key asset of the National Capital Commission is land. This asset originated in the authorization from the federal government to the commission to acquire real estate in advance of need and before speculative development could increase prices to the point where government projects, whether buildings or parks, would become far more expensive than they have. Of the 1,800 square miles making up the national capital region, the federal government owns outright 190 square miles. In the urban part of the region, the federal government owns 28 per cent of the land. The commission has spent about \$160 million for land. That land today is worth close to \$1,000 million. A lot of this property is committed to long-term use such as parkland and any financial profit through sale could not be realized, of course. However, take the case of Lebreton Flats, one mile west of Parliament Hill. The cost of acquiring and clearing this land was about 5 per cent of its present day value. The original cost in 1962 was only a fraction of what it would be now to the public treasury as the NCC and CMHC start a major housing development there.

This brings me to the first particular subject I wish to discuss very briefly, and that is the NCC in respect of planning. I feel the NCC, as I mentioned earlier, should take the lead in general planning for the national capital area, and indeed, as it has up to now, in the development of both sides of the Ottawa River. The Ottawa side is broken down into a plan for the Ottawa area generally and then one for the core area. I also feel that the position it has taken in respect of the southeast part of the city and the acquisition of land around the Carlsbad Springs area is a forward-thinking and forthright one which should be encouraged.

It seems to me that we do have a conflict here between the wishes of the regional government on the one hand and the wishes of the NCC on the other. It seems to me, however, that the NCC has carried out a number of studies of this area and has provided reports in respect of the suitability of this land, whether it can be used for this type of housing project or whether it should be developed