

Suggested Lack of Urban Policy

phone call to trigger an adjustment in traffic lights to better accommodate a change in demand?

Finally, there is the enclosure system, although "system" may over-dignify the concept. Nevertheless, it too, like federalism, is a fact. My concept here is the various structures which we erect in our cities to surround the places where life goes on. Climate has imposed the necessity of enclosing our activity centres, but our response has been mostly individual structures—houses, apartments, hotels, schools, churches, offices, playgrounds, arenas, stadiums and so on. Generally, they are individual entities designed and installed to answer individual needs. I believe that a great deal would be gained, both economically, in getting better value for resources used and, even more important, in achieving a better means to improve the quality of urban life, if we could deal with these enclosures as a total urban system in each city—as an organic whole, not just a collection of lonely architectural entities.

It is all very well to urge research, invention and development upon the federal government, and I am satisfied that there are enough knowledgeable people deeply concerned about our cities to make these activities productive and worth while. But what about the practical application of that urban research, invention and development? I think that if the federal government were to take this global approach to the urban fact and its solution, it would be found that provincial governments exist which are equally concerned and would happily co-operate in practical demonstrations of the benefits of the approach.

Let us envisage a model city of, say, 250,000 people. It is not a model which is simply a collection of buildings; rather it is an enclosure system which integrates all the other systems I have been talking about: input, processing and disposal, transportation, information and communications. It will be readily appreciated that such a model could not be created piecemeal. It must a total model with every system and sub-system fully integrated with the others. It is a big approach to a big problem and one which certainly would require considerably more public control and, hence, less individual choice than has heretofore been acceptable to many of us. It is a suggestion which I advance only with considerable hesitation; but on balance I fail to see why we should not muster the same techniques to meet this large problem as we do to

[Mr. Mahoney.]

meet others less large. Because of the emphasis on over-all planning and the downgrading of individual choice, existing building codes would have little application. The entire model would have to take into account the requirements of its users and reject existing regulations which arbitrarily require this, that or the other building material, number of duplex receptacles per lineal foot of base-board; Y number of yards between curb cuts. The preoccupation of existing building codes with picayune detail to the exclusion of an overview of the end result has been a contributing factor to many of our urban failures to date. Another, perhaps less ideal, opportunity for a demonstration of the concept could be to offer it to existing cities for the total redevelopment of an existing area. To be meaningful, this approach would require both a large area and large population—an area within which say 50 or 100,000 work and live.

The suggestion implicit in the motion before us that the federal government has no urban policy is arrant nonsense. Ironically, the mover of the motion read a litany of federal policies having primary urban impact, thus giving the lie to the premise of his motion. This government does indeed have an urban policy. It is not nearly as simplistic as the proposer of this motion would like it, but then Canada isn't as simple as he thinks it is either. It is perhaps better identified as a collection of policies in various functional areas, all of which have added up over the years and still add up to increasing urban population, prosperity and opportunity. It may very well be that the time has arrived for the government to mark the growing importance of our cities by establishing a department of urban affairs. I incline to that view.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

Some hon. Members: Continue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Is that agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Mahoney: Thank you. This concept need not involve a constitutional problem. The federal government will have to continue to deal with the urban fact as well as the constitutional fact. The government's ability to deal with the urban fact could very well be made more effective by delegating to a single