

National Capital of Canada

Mr. Speaker, we have to face the facts, and this is why I have introduced this bill to create a legal framework for what is now a reality. In fact, in 1972 or 1973, I believe, when the government introduced its reorganization project for departments and government administration, it replaced the word "Ottawa" in the acts governing the departments whose headquarters were in Ottawa, the Canadian capital, by the term "the region of the National Capital". This was in recognition of the fact that the National Capital Region was to all intents and purposes the capital of the country. If you go to Ottawa international airport and look at the airlines' advertising you will see that Air Canada, CP and other companies list their arrival and departure time under Ottawa-Hull. When I returned from Miami a short while ago on flight 172 to Baltimore and Ottawa I noticed on the sign "Ottawa-Hull". So it is only a normal occurrence that airlines, both national and foreign, should recognize an actual situation. That is why we must consider the capital of Canada as the National Capital Region, and I am not talking about making it a federal district, although I have mentioned it. Also, you will note that the 1981 telephone book, for those who have received it, reads in big letters Ottawa-Hull. And there are a host of similar things. The Auberge de la Chaudière—I do not want to give it any publicity but it is a magnificent hotel—gives its location in its ads in *Time* magazine as Ottawa-Hull.

There are many such cases. Since 1969 we have had a new Hull, an urban Hull which is spreading out to Gatineau, and I see the hon. member for Gatineau (Mr. Cousineau) might prefer to say that Gatineau is spreading out to Hull, but in any case, one thing is sure and that is that we now have an urban population within a five to six-mile radius which is part of the National Capital.

There have been many surveys, Mr. Speaker. The people of Hull have been asked many times by CROP and other opinion polls if they wanted to belong to the National Capital and the response has always been about 85 per cent in favour. That is why, Mr. Speaker, the law should reflect the actual facts. Now changing the Constitution certainly poses problems in some regards but as far as section 16 is concerned, we do not need a committee, we do not need anything. Just listen to the witnesses! I think that was done by the joint committee on the Constitution in 1972.

There was another committee on the National Capital of course which, for reasons that escape me, did not pursue its work. Still, things must change, otherwise someone later on in history will certainly bring up what has been an inconsistency dating back many years. I am not talking about the mayors of Hull who have always held the same view and who are quite contented. But ask the people on the street and the majority will tell you that they are very happy to live in the National Capital Region.

I still have many things to say, Mr. Speaker, but time is running short, and I know that my colleagues would like to

speak on this subject. I hope they will not rise merely to hear themselves speak but have a genuine contribution to make to this debate. Unfortunately there are many members in this House who rise and have nothing to say. But I would like to hear their views if they really have some to express. I am sure that I have friends on both sides who, if they have been living here for some years, will understand what I am talking about. I do not want to take anything away from Ottawa, quite the opposite, I think it is a marvellous city. A million visitors come to the National Capital every year. These people do not come only to visit the Parliament buildings. They come to see the capital of their country. I think Ottawa is a beautiful city, an extraordinarily clean city. That is why it should share all its amenities with the other side, as it does with its suburbs. I am just as eager to see the area which is not Ottawa but within the national capital region, as shown on an official map of the national capital region included as part of the national capital, as I am to see the townships adjacent to Hull also become part of the national capital of Canada.

● (1720)

Besides, Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that those who really want their capital to reflect truly its status as the seat of the federal government would want it to symbolize the power and the unity of the country, to be the home and the soul of our nation as well as the image it casts to the world. In my opinion Ottawa-Hull is a microcosm of what tomorrow's Canada should be.

I hope that those who take the floor after me will have something to say on that subject at another sitting; I might find that they were completely mistaken.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, I find myself in the opposite corner of the House and actually the physical distance between us would force my friend from Hull to use binoculars, because we almost need them in the House to see each other.

However, as a Canadian from the city of Edmonton, I am just as interested in the national capital of my country as the hon. member who lives in the neighbouring city of Hull. In my opinion, that is all he is, a neighbour who represents the citizens of Hull, Quebec.

From a geographic point of view, I entirely agree with the hon. member and those who find it would be more attractive for Ottawa to extend on both sides of the Ottawa river at the foot of the Gatineau hills, because it is an exceptionally beautiful area not easily matched elsewhere in Canada. Having lived here for 16 years, I will admit that I am sympathetic to the idea. However, the hon. member is a physician and I am a lawyer. Therefore I would like to consider the bill. Unfortunately, to start, the hon. member has fallen into a trap. He argues from the premise that the end justifies the means. Actually, although it might perhaps be advisable to have the entire area which consists of the city of