

THE SENATE

Monday, June 28, 1948.

The Senate met at 3 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers and routine proceedings.

NATIONAL CAPITAL

MOTION

Hon. WISHART McL. ROBERTSON moved:

That this house is of the opinion,—

(1) That the requirements of a national capital involve, from time to time, developments of a character beyond the municipal improvements ordinarily required in other cities;

(2) That the development of a national capital is at least in part a national responsibility, in view of the fact that Ottawa is designated by the British North America Act to be the capital of Canada;

(3) That the carrying out of planned improvements requires a clear expression of intention to proceed with necessary developments in a manner which will ensure continuity;

(4) That it is desirable that all developments of the capital should be in accordance with an approved plan which has regard to the position of the city of Ottawa as a national capital in the present, and to its probable needs as the capital of Canada in years to come.

(5) That a special account in the consolidated revenue fund, to be known as the national capital fund, should be created to which appropriation may be made annually by parliament over a period of years of the amounts required from time to time to meet the costs of such projects as may be recommended by the federal district commission and approved by the governor in council for the development of the national capital and the surrounding area, in accordance with the plan;

(6) That it is desirable that the work necessary to this end be under the supervision of the Federal District Commission, distinct from its ordinary operations;

(7) That the expenditure of moneys for these purposes should be conditional on the effective co-operation of the city of Ottawa and other municipalities within the national capital district.

He said: I have asked the honourable senator from Thunder Bay (Hon. Mr. Paterson) to speak to this resolution. As honourable senators will remember, he was chairman of the committee that had before it representatives of the Federal District Commission, and considered plans and long-term proposals in connection with the city of Ottawa.

Hon. NORMAN McL. PATERSON: Honourable senators, it would take at least a two-hour speech to properly handle this subject. As it is a hot day, and I have never made a two-hour speech in my life, I shall only burden you for fifteen or twenty minutes.

This is an easy motion to speak to, because it is about your city, my city, the most beautiful city in Canada—Ottawa. As we all know, it is located on the confluence of three rivers, the Rideau, the Gatineau, and that wonderful river, the Ottawa, which provides a waterway towards the sea for navigation by boats of a limited size.

The historical value of Ottawa cannot be stressed too much. Samuel Champlain passed the site of Ottawa in 1613. In 1800 Philemon Wright established a settlement where the city of Hull now stands, and in about 1820 one Nicholas Sparks came over to this side of the river and located on land which is now in the heart of Ottawa. In 1827 this settlement was given the name Bytown. In 1854 it became Ottawa, and in 1857 was chosen by Queen Victoria as the capital of Canada. Ten years later, in 1867, the British North America Act confirmed it as the capital of Canada, which it was to remain until otherwise directed by Her Majesty.

Through the years Ottawa has developed as a diplomatic centre. At the present time there are twenty-five or thirty foreign offices or agencies in Ottawa, representing various countries throughout the world, and eventually there will be over seventy. From this it will be seen that as time goes on the city will increase in size and importance.

The wisdom of planning ahead in the development of this city is well illustrated by what happened to Washington. In 1791 Washington and Jefferson commissioned Pierre Charles L'Enfant to prepare plans for the development of that city. At that time there were only 4,000,000 people living in the United States, and the capital was planned for a population of from 500,000 to 800,000 inhabitants. The plan provoked great ridicule, and in 1825 it was abandoned. However, in 1900 it was again proceeded with, and, although the cost was terrific, a magnificent city was created out of a piece of flat land.

The Ottawa plans of Jacques Greber and his associates cover a future period of from eighty to a hundred years. There is no intention at this time of appropriating the full amount of money to be spent on these wonderful plans, but something has to be started now. The city is growing rapidly and the transportation system needs immediate attention. Moneys are required for alterations which are to be worked out in accordance with the general plan. If these alterations are not made now by the Federal District Commission, the City of Ottawa itself might proceed to make changes that would not be in line with the general long-distance plan. Consequently, the