

Environmental Affairs

municipalities. He should be addressing the provinces, not Parliament. It is their problem and we all know that.

Mr. Angus: Don't you live in a municipality?

[Translation]

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Yes, I live in a municipality, but it is not—

[English]

Let us look briefly at the history of this. From 1961 until 1980, CMHC had a program that dealt with this, a program introduced by Mr. Diefenbaker's Government. The CMHC program was enacted in 1960 through a change to the National Housing Act. Loans were given out, 25 per cent of which were to be forgiven.

The program was restricted to only new and extensions to existing sewage treatment plants and main-trunk sewers. Secondary sewers and water supply facilities were not included. The federal Government cited twin objectives for the program of job creation and water pollution abatement in providing this assistance. There was a sunset provision in the original 1961 program that was to have permitted the 25 per cent forgiveness only for those expenditures incurred up to March 31, 1963.

As Canada grew very, very quickly in population and in demand for housing, the urban population grew from about 6.2 million in 1941 to 13.7 million by 1961. That put tremendous pressures on the housing stock in Canada and there was a need for more co-operation between municipalities, provinces and the federal Government to provide more sanitary services.

The sunset clause of which I spoke was extended repeatedly through amendments to the legislation until the process had become automatic and almost routine. The administration of these programs became more complex and very controversial. From a situation of determining eligibility, strict financial arrangements, inspection and making progress payments as befitted the mortgage function of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the program started to deteriorate under the onslaught of provincial and municipal complaints of excessive red tape and federal intrusion into a provincial municipal area. It was not an area of direct federal responsibility.

In 1979, the Liberal Government of the time virtually handed over the process to the provinces. The federal Government became pretty much relegated to writing cheques to the provinces. What started out as a noble program with clearly defined objectives and parameters degenerated over a 20-year period into an undeclared fiscal transfer whereby moneys collected federally were transferred to pay for local services.

I wish to refer briefly to *Hansard* of January 19, 1981, a time when the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) was a member of the ruling Party. At that time, government Members asked if it was appropriate for the federal Government to continue funding the provision of

services which were the responsibility of the provinces and municipalities. They questioned the rationale for such a program by asking whether the Government, raising moneys through national taxation, should not be accountable for the expenditure of such revenues and whether there was not better value for money in other programs, particularly job-creation programs. They asked themselves if the program was valid, given the climate of what was beginning to be serious fiscal restraint.

In 1984, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities submitted a report to the decision-makers in Canada at the provincial, municipal and federal levels, and suggested a new program of roads, bridges and sidewalks with a total price tag of \$15 billion. In fact, water and sewer infrastructure accounted for half of that amount.

We have problems in Ottawa. There are two bridges over the Canal, the Mackenzie King Bridge and the Lyon Street Bridge, which the NCC wants to turn over to the region. The region does not want them and there are problems about who will pay for the repairs because they have been neglected for so long. The federal Government cannot always be looked upon as the big brother, the one to provide all the big bucks all the time to pay for these problems.

In 1984, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities outlined in its five-year program municipal, federal and provincial cost sharing of one-third each. There is a problem with sewage disposal in the National Capital Region. There is a genuine problem with the Green Creek sewage plant and I hope we will be able to reach an agreement as to how that will be financed.

Recently, Ted Carmichael of the C. D. Howe Institute spoke again of the importance of not losing sight of the federal deficit and the national debt which is still climbing, something over which we have little or no control, although the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) has shown great leadership in reducing the amount. Where do we get the money for these things? Everyone says: "Go to the feds, they have all the money," but we do not.

I think of the Rideau River and Mooney's Bay. The Hon. Member has done a useful service to the House today by allowing us to bring to the attention of the public the importance of having cleaner water resources. Mooney's Bay is a mess. My brother and sister have houses there. They are afraid to water-ski on the river. If they ever fall into it and take two gulps of that water, they may end up in hospital because of storm sewage runoff. Their kids cannot swim in the river.

It cannot always be the federal Government that bails out money to provide better sewage facilities. The Hon. Member has brought this to the attention of the public, but I do not think the solution can be found in this House.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) has put this motion on the Order Paper and I was pleased to have the opportunity to second the motion.