

undoubtedly one of the reasons why in the early 70s—I believe it was in 1973—the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Trudeau) asked Mr. Douglas Fullerton, a former chairman of the National Capital Commission, to look into the structure and the administration of the National Capital Commission.

In 1975, Mr. Fullerton, through the right hon. Prime Minister, tabled his report in the Senate and the House of Commons and in July 1975—July 17, 1975, to be more exact—a Special Joint Committee on the National Capital Region was established and began to sit in 1975. Several witnesses appeared before that committee to make representations, including the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Danson) who was responsible for the National Capital Commission to parliament.

The National Capital Commission was represented at that time by Mr. Edgar Gallant who is now chairman of the Public Service Commission. The representatives of the Ottawa regional community, the Ottawa-Carleton regional municipality and many other witnesses appeared before that committee. In several representations, they blamed the National Capital Commission for interfering in areas which, according to certain witnesses, did not come under the commission, but rather under the provinces or municipalities within the region. They blamed the commission for its local planning process. Mr. Speaker, those who live on both sides of the Ottawa River know quite well that 15, 20 or 25 years ago, regional cities and municipalities had little or no urban planning facilities, and the National Capital Commission was even asked at times to lend them experts in that field.

● (1722)

Mr. Speaker, things are very different today on both sides of the Ottawa River. As I have just mentioned, the Ottawa-Carleton regional municipality is on the Ottawa side and the Outaouais regional community is on the Quebec side. Since the establishment of those two communities, it is much easier for the National Capital Commission representatives to have a dialogue concerning regional planning and other matters.

The National Capital Commission has also been blamed for massive land purchases on the Quebec side. I would like to talk about the Quebec side since I am more familiar with it, but even though certain people accuse the NCC of having made massive land purchases, we know that had the National Capital Commission not purchased this land it might have been bought by foreign interests, as happened in the Templeton area three or four years ago.

When the then representatives of the National Capital Commission came before the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates to explain their supplementary estimates, I drew the attention of the public to this matter but I received no reaction. Certain people seemed to think that when the National Capital Commission purchased land on behalf of the Canadian government, it was as if it had been a foreign

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government. Yes, the money used for the transactions came from taxpayers throughout Canada.

The motion blames the commission for not consulting the municipalities, the cities and the other associations and not co-operating with them. I would like to say that it is now easier to do so. The National Capital Commission has had four chairmen in the last ten years: Mr. Douglas Fullerton, Mr. Edgar Gallant, Mr. Pierre Juneau and the Hon. C. M. Drury.

At this point, I would like to make a digression. I was amazed by the comments of the hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton (Mrs. Pigott) when she spoke on January 30, 1978. She was referring to certain editorial comments at the time when Mr. Drury was appointed chairman of the National Capital Commission. But, Mr. Speaker, why express doubts when someone who has had political functions takes over other responsibilities? From the outset there seems to be some question as to the ability of this person to be able to meet the new challenges. I gladly join with my colleagues of Hull and Ottawa West with respect to the present incumbent of the chairmanship of the National Capital Commission, the Hon. C. M. Drury. I have known him for several years and he has been among other things Minister of Public Works. He is a resident of the Outaouais region and I am sure he will be able to meet the challenges of the new responsibilities he will be entrusted with.

Apparently, Mr. Speaker, the National Capital Commission is being blamed for various things. Yet we know that the National Capital Commission has also acted positively in a way which is to its credit, however I do not have enough time to mention them all in the course of the short period allotted to me. Nevertheless I hope that the population is familiar with the positive actions of the National Capital Commission as well as its accomplishments on both sides of the Ottawa River. I can think of one right now. Mr. Speaker, you are probably aware that before 1974 or 1975, when a civil servant or a passenger went from Buckingham to Ottawa, he had to pay twice. It was the same for a person from Ottawa who wanted to go to the Quebec side. Through the financial co-operation of the National Capital Commission and both communities, these passengers now have to pay only once.

The National Capital Commission also took part in road system improvements on the Quebec side on behalf of the Government of Canada, namely the widening of Maloney Boulevard and the building of the Portage and Draveurs bridges. I also hope that current problems over the construction of the water treatment plant in Templeton will be settled as soon as possible. The Government of Canada, through the National Capital Commission, is prepared to share the construction cost of this plant in Templeton.

Most everyone is aware of the existing problem. It was in 1977 that the prime contractor for the construction of the project, namely the Quebec government, called for tenders; the lowest bidder was a company with an office in Ottawa; for the