

The Address—Mr. Francis

because they just did not put A and B together and they did not draw conclusions as to the growth of the national capital. As a result, the province of Ontario acquired several thousand acres of land for a land bank, and there has been a little friction over this misunderstanding. The province does not feel it can proceed and that, indeed, it has been induced to acquire land which it cannot turn to any useful purpose at this point. This is an understandable reaction, Mr. Speaker.

Although I welcome the new chairman and the new minister, both of whom are fully aware of their responsibilities in this area, the expression of federal interest in the national capital through a Crown corporation has, even by its concept, certain limitations. The Auditor General has made a number of observations on the conduct of the affairs of this corporation, observations which are not complimentary. A number of other events have given us reason for concern, and I know the new chairman is taking stock of the problems he has inherited. I look forward to a much better relationship between the minister, the new chairman and the regional municipalities. The problem has been compounded on the Quebec side by the developments since November 15 and the election of the Parti Quebecois government—

[Translation]

—member Jocelyne Ouellette, the minister responsible for the region, who simply dislikes the federal government and simply says that she intends to give them the boot.

[English]

The minister who has been elected has adopted a very belligerent and hostile attitude toward any federal activities in this area. The task still remains of sorting out the respective responsibilities of the Department of Public Works, the Department of Transport, the NCC and the various arms of the federal authority in this area in order to develop rational and reasonable long-term plans and present them to the regional planning board in a co-operative way—not a dictatorial way; not by threats such as, “You must do this” or, “You cannot cross federal lands” in an attempt to lay down, in an unco-operative and dictatorial way, to the regional municipalities and their elected officers what they must or must not do.

Those of us who visited Washington were impressed with the federal agency in Washington, the National Capital Planning Commission, which is not permitted to own an acre of land and which is kept in a purely advisory capacity, in great contrast to the situation in Ottawa. I think the government of the day could profit from a report by this committee, putting together the evidence it has acquired and presenting it to the people of Canada and to this parliament for appropriate action.

I do not like to sound negative, because one does not achieve very much by doing that. I hope that what I have said has called to the attention of the government some measures that are urgent and essential to the good government of this country through the public service and to the good government

[Mr. Francis.]

of the national capital through the instruments that it chooses to exercise.

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, to read the throne speech one would think that Canada is the whole world, that wrestling with the economy and the national unity question has exhausted this government. Despite our position of influence on the Security Council of the United Nations, the government has no international initiatives to offer. Apparently we do not even need to think about the international scene. When our house is in order, then we will be able to live happily ever after.

How different is reality? Terrorism, international murder, skyjacking, are direct frontal attacks on modern society—as we have seen in Europe this week—yet the government ignores these new realities.

Human rights violations are spreading, and political prisoners are increasing, but the government has nothing to say, not even a word of congratulation to Amnesty International which deserves the commendation of all members of the House for being awarded the 1977 Nobel Peace Prize for its efforts to free prisoners of conscience and abolish torture.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roche: The list of global problems is awe inspiring. There is the rapidly escalating arms race, the increasing danger of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, racism in Africa, shortages and maldistribution of food, population pressures, the threat to the environment, the persistence of massive poverty, the competition for control of marine resources, the complex problems of energy, the dwindling supplies of non-renewable resources, and the whole spectrum of international economic ills from inflation, unemployment and indebtedness to problems of unstable commodity and money markets.

Does the government actually think that this conglomeration of problems poses no danger to Canada? It is time for the government to wake up. Canada's interests extend beyond the excessive introspection that characterizes our present stance. What has happened to the vision of Lester B. Pearson who recognized that Canada has a meaningful role to play in international affairs? The exertion of creative leadership in the world community would, in my view, contribute to the solving of our internal problems by giving us a renewed sense of purpose. But the Pearson vision is gone, obliterated by a government which cannot even lead Canadians, let alone the world community.

As Professor John Holmes notes, we have entered middle age as a nation; we have lost the enthusiasm of ideals without having acquired the solid purpose of maturity. Mr. Speaker, new Canadian policies of enlightened internationalism are urgently needed, for modern events tie us more closely than ever to the rest of the world. Our energy future is directly affected by decisions made in the Middle East. Our grain sales depend, in part, on the fields of China and India. Our economic viability as a nation depends on our ability to compete in growing markets abroad. Our security, both physical and