

Many of them involve provincial consultation, but there are those that could be implemented directly.

The future of this country in terms of the quality of our life, Mr. Speaker, will be determined largely in the urban centres where 75 per cent of our people live. We have been reminded forcefully by the Economic Council of Canada of the appalling extent of urban poverty, yet we have in this house today a Prime Minister of Canada making what must surely be one of the most complacent speeches to the people of Canada regarding housing that it has ever been the misfortune of a Prime Minister to make. We know of housing conditions and the housing shortage. From time to time, the Prime Minister himself has acknowledged the danger of protest unsatisfied that builds into violence.

If the Prime Minister and the government cannot be convinced that these problems affect the heart and soul of the nation, that they are problems requiring federal action, then there is unfortunately very strong reason for pessimism.

During the election campaign last spring, the Prime Minister promised to establish in co-operation with provincial governments a program of national priorities for our cities. He promised to establish urban research centres in selected urban universities. He also promised to introduce a co-ordinated program to advance the techniques of urban mass transport. The time has long passed to honour those pledges. Certainly, it is time to bring in the legislation based on the report of the task force where it relates to the federal jurisdiction. Furthermore, this government should consult with the provinces as quickly as possible to see the extent to which, through co-operation, the other recommendations can be implemented and to what extent federal help may be required.

There has been no action on housing and urban problems because for the Prime Minister, according to the Minister of Transport, the constitution has become the great hang-up, the straitjacket, the impediment to progress. Yesterday, in his letter to the Minister of Transport accepting the latter's resignation, the Prime Minister said, and I quote:

The platform on which our government was elected was clearly and emphatically a one nation platform, and it has not changed.

There he goes again, Mr. Speaker. It is that fellow Faribault who is not building the houses!

Housing

The Prime Minister might have been able to get away with that kind of political garbage during the election campaign, but it is a sorry way to try to meet the problems of governing this country. Now, we know how this "one nation platform" works in practice. We know because the Minister of Transport has given us the inside information.

The Minister of Transport confirmed what was apparent as long ago as February 14, when the Prime Minister said in this house, speaking of urban renewal, housing and urban transport:

Until the constitution is brought into the 20th century in some of these respects, governments are to a large degree powerless to solve the problems either by acting alone or in co-operation with other levels of government.

I want you to contrast these two statements, Mr. Speaker. I want to call attention to the extent to which this statement constitutes a rationalization for doing nothing, that is to suggest under our existing constitution the governments of Canada are largely powerless to deal with problems such as housing, urban renewal and urban transport. If the federal and provincial governments over the years had taken that position, there would never have been any progress in this country. I repeat what the Prime Minister said a month or so ago:

Until the constitution is brought into the 20th century in some of these respects, governments are to a large degree powerless to solve the problems either by acting alone or in co-operation with other levels of government.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister said in the corridor, "most of the fundamental issues in this country could be settled under the present constitution through co-operation between the federal government and the provinces." How can a Prime Minister who makes contradictory statements like these be taken seriously? A month or so ago the Prime Minister said it was virtually impossible to solve these problems under the existing constitution. Yesterday, he said most of the fundamental issues could be settled under the present constitution through co-operation. If the Prime Minister believed what he said yesterday, Mr. Speaker, and if the Minister of Transport believed that the Prime Minister believed it, he would not have submitted his resignation. The Minister of Transport resigned because, as he put it, the Prime Minister has a theory of federalism, "of ten virtually autonomous provinces held together by strings of a fairly weak government with its responsibilities largely confined to tariffs and customs and