

serious about examining the structure of power in Canada we have to look beyond government to the other institutions that condition and shape our lives. Industry and commerce are centred in the cities. With them remain the wealth and opportunities to be found within business. Our great labour unions are urban institutions. Education, in the form of post-secondary schooling and in the regulation of our schooling systems, is centred in the cities.

The media and communications are located in the cities. Even what goes into our daily newspaper is reported by people from the cities on the basis of their urban news judgment. And because the major markets are in the cities, items of interest to rural Canadians are often ignored. Transportation facilities are located in the cities. In my area of Ontario we do not even have passenger train service.

Cultural facilities and artists are to be found in the cities. The recognition of the role which artists play in determining our national heritage is based upon urban criteria. How many Canada Council grants have gone to rural organizations? When was the last time that a country music singer was asked to dine at 24 Sussex Drive? They are excluded because of a sense of cultural elitism on the part of the people who decide what constitutes culture, despite the fact that for millions of Canadians country music is part of their lifestyle. As our society has become centralized and bureaucratized, rural Canadians have become forgotten Canadians. Many of my friends in politics are from the cities, and they tell me that they want to participate in the cities because the great problems of the next few decades will be urban problems which will require urban solutions. How myopic can they be?

We have set in motion a chain of events which will serve to destroy rural Canada and which can only worsen the problems of the cities unless it is stopped. Almost every three hours another rural Ontarian leaves the farm because the economic cards are so badly stacked against the family farmer. And as the rural townships depopulate, the community school and church are closed and the general store is forced to close its door. Because the rich people from the cities, who buy up the farms for use as weekend retreats, do their shopping in the city and refuse to make improvements on their land or to township roads, the small stores in the rural communities are closed and township councils are unable to provide the level of services that are necessary to keep their areas viable.

As the rural people leave the farms in search of new opportunities, they migrate to the cities where they only add to the problems of unemployment, of welfare, of housing, of transportation, of pollution and of policing. How much cheaper would it have been for our society to keep the rural areas vital and healthy than to have to deal with the results of their neglect when they are felt in the cities? And what are the social costs of uprooting rural Canadians from their lifestyle of decades and forcing them to adapt to the way of life in the collection of expressways and neuroses that we call cities? Joni Mitchell, the Canadian folksinger, described the situation well when she said:

And on and on we seem to go

That you don't know what you've got till it's gone

Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Suspension

They paved paradise

And put up a parking lot.

The time has come in Canada to start to decentralize power in Canada, to return it to the small communities and to the people of this country. The time has come for a rebirth of democracy in this country.

True democracy does not lend itself to neat formulas based upon the domination by a large and powerful group over a smaller and powerless one. It means the right and ability of all people, regardless of wealth, family background or geography, to freedom and dignity, the right to live their own lives in peace. I turned my back on a career in the city that might have been easier and more prosperous and returned home to run for political office because I believe it is about time somebody started to speak out for small towns and rural Canada. I think it is about time that rural Canadians were again given a chance for a decent life. It is about time a major political party in this country repudiated the policies of successive administrations that have centralized power in our society and disenfranchised the average Canadian, whether he lives in the cities or in the country.

The issue is not one of an antiquated way of life passing into history. It is one part of the struggle to maintain and restore those elements of humanity that still remain in a technological culture that is so often coldly brutal and inhumane. It is the struggle for the right to be ourselves. Rural Canadians love this country and we believe in its future. We want our children to have a part in Canada's future. That is what this whole debate is really about.

Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I will not be speaking very long on this subject, but I would like to say to the hon. member for Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo (Mr. Beatty) that his ode to rural Canada was very moving. I felt that he put it extremely well. It needed to be said again this year. At other times my colleague from Regina-Lake Centre (Mr. Benjamin) and I have discussed the decline and the erosion of rural Canada and the consequent problems for our future, as a matter of fact to the extent that I personally feel it would be almost worth while subsidizing people to remain and make the rural communities much more viable. This would be less costly in the long run than the costs of social programs, housing, police and other costs of the megalopolises which now seem to be part of our future.

Redistribution in a country such as Canada is not going to be easy. The demographic trends make it extremely difficult. Regional disparities in our country make it extremely difficult. No one is going to suggest that whatever formula we come up with will meet 100 per cent approval.

I think that in my province of British Columbia, within the parameters of the act under which it must function, the redistribution committee did a pretty good job. Certainly the members of the commission did not please everyone, but any representations that were made to them, at least when it was present, including ones I made myself, were listened to thoughtfully and I think resulted in changes along the lines of the suggestions made. Certainly that could not be done in all cases because some of the suggestions were contradictory, but in the main they