

National Capital Commission

my thanks for the confidence they kindly put in me when they entrusted me with the representation in the Canadian parliament of one of the oldest counties on the island of Montreal.

As a professional town-planner, I would like, Mr. Chairman, to commend the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) for his happy thought when he gave us the guarantee that the major elements of the general national capital plan would be carried out in the near future.

As a matter of fact, the bill that has been introduced is, without any doubt, one of the most important ones submitted to date on the national level with regard to town-planning.

One of the main tasks of the federal government today in the field of town-planning is, indeed, to give to the nation a national capital of which all Canadian citizens may be proud.

The speech from the throne, at the beginning of May, announced federal legislation designed to insure a long-term functional development of the national capital. The legislation now before the house is designed to reorganize the federal district commission so as to insure the carrying on of the embellishment program of Ottawa and its environments, as well as to endow the whole nation with a capital city in keeping with its progress. One of the main provisions aimed at by this embellishment program is the protection of the green belt provided under the capital development plan.

The federal government will put several million dollars at the disposal of the commission to expropriate lands included in this green belt.

The federal district commission has sought without success to prevent construction in that green belt. So that, after due consideration, it was resolved that the best means of achieving this green belt was not by zoning, but indeed by expropriation. By experience, I can state that such a decision is sound and, moreover, the only practical one.

The aim is to keep that area as a reserve for future extensions and to make sure that, in future years, the capital shall not have to spend money through various public services for districts laid out in a haphazard way.

It is expected that the population of Ottawa will reach about 600,000 by 1980; it

is now about 230,000. Water and sewer services have been anticipated for that figure and a faster growth would mean an alteration of plans prepared at great cost. The federal district commission has already invested many millions of dollars in the present program of municipal services.

The green belt will serve as a barrier, maintaining the metropolitan area within the limits of 600,000 inhabitants. New districts could be built outside it but would have to be serviced by suburban municipalities.

When he announced the bill, the Prime Minister indicated that the crown would buy those properties and would lease them, with the reservation that all necessary restrictions to carry out the objective would be applied.

The Prime Minister added that areas to be included in the green belt, and the limits with regard to the use of the lands therein, would be settled and submitted to the approval of the government by the federal district commission after consultation with the interested local authorities. The government wants to be assured that the views of the local people interested in the matter with regard to detail will be considered.

As the Prime Minister rightly indicated in this parliament, experience has shown—and my own experience as a town-planner cannot but confirm it—that if efficient control is not exercised in this respect, cities tend to draw themselves out into suburbs. The result is what we can call ribbon development, which cannot be reconciled with long-term programs that are essential if the capital of Canada is to be preserved and developed so as to justify and rouse the pride of present and future generations.

The Prime Minister also mentioned the need for implementing a number of other development and improvement projects for the national capital.

We are convinced that, through the understanding the Prime Minister has always shown with respect to city planning, and owing to his energy, the national capital will, before long, be a true symbol of the greatness of the Canadian nation. As a town planner I cannot but wish, Mr. Chairman, that the legislation now before the house will be passed as soon as possible.

(Text):

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Chairman, I think it has been made clear from the speeches thus far that practically all members in this house