

threw out the proposal. This is not the way to give leadership.

The minister's reference to the housing conference reminds me to remind him that all the studies we have indulged in on these problems of housing and urban affairs should have given someone some knowledge about them. In addition to numerous books and articles, there were the Nicholson symposia held right across the country in 1966, and then there was the federal-provincial conference on housing to which the minister has referred. There were the studies by the Economic Council, and then a task force report. Yet despite all these studies the minister stands up and says, "I don't know what to do about urban renewal; I have to study this some more. I don't know what to do about public housing; I have to go back and study it more. I don't know what my policies ought to be in various directions; I still need some more study." This is a farcical excuse.

Since my time is about up, Mr. Speaker, let me add that I am convinced that all this is also the result of the attitude which the Prime Minister takes toward the constitution. I am convinced there are many members on the Liberal side of the house who, even though their language of criticism of the government would necessarily be a great deal more temperate than mine, are just as concerned about the problems to which the hon. member for Hamilton West and I have referred as we are, and are as dissatisfied with the performance of their government as we are.

To them I say, as I say to this house and to the people of Canada, if lack of leadership is still to be seen, in my opinion it is in large measure due to the legalistic, strait-jacketey approach which the Prime Minister takes to the Canadian constitution. It is the concept which he indicated in the working papers which he tabled the other day, and which I have only had a chance to glance through, a concept of an attempt to compartmentalize certain of the powers and of an attempt to make the provinces all-powerful in the exercise of certain other powers. It is this attitude which has resulted in the arid and legalistic nonsense of our not having a minister of housing and urban affairs.

There is nothing in modern society that is as important as the problem of urban living. All the speeches made a year ago by the Prime Minister, by the leaders of other parties, and by members of all parties in this house about the quality of life and improving

*Alleged Failure to Cope With Urban Growth* the quality of life—all that stuff that was talked about during the election campaign a year ago has no meaning and is utterly dishonest unless related to the life of the city dweller in a modern industrial society.

● (5:00 p.m.)

I think I see you, Mr. Speaker, edging to the edge of your seat. I am completing my remarks. It is because of the importance of this problem that I welcome the motion of the hon. member for Hamilton West and say to the minister, with much more sorrow than pleasure, that his defensive mincing kind of excuse was a revelation of his inability and the inability of the government even to appreciate the nature of the problem which faces 70 per cent of the Canadian people today and which will face 80 per cent of the Canadian people in a few years' time.

**Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the motion proposed by the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander). I must also concur in some of the remarks made by the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis). I do so as a member representing an urban area. While I fully appreciate the problems faced by my colleagues from the rural constituencies of Canada, it is my conviction that the greatest and most urgent problems facing the nation today arise out of the general problem of urban development. I am equally convinced that in no other area has this government so obviously shirked its responsibility or failed so dismally by avoiding meaningful action.

Since taking office a year ago the government has done nothing but talk about the need to do something. We have had promises from ministers and pleas for action from backbenchers on the government side. But the real issue has been obscured in a screen of words. I am sure that a scholarly man such as the Prime Minister is reputed to be will appreciate my borrowing Macbeth's well known words to describe this verbal camouflage: "It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." And "nothing" is the only word to describe what this government has accomplished in finding a solution to Canada's No. 1 continuing crisis.

When we consider that close to three-quarters of our people already live jammed into cities and towns occupying less than one one-hundredth of our total area, we can see something of the size of the problem. In spite of