

National Capital Commission

make-up—because of membership—because of those who have a greater interest within the National Capital Commission—the city of Ottawa,—the city of Hull—the province of Ontario—the province of Quebec and, indeed, the federal government.

It is my view that we must devise some means of bringing in recommendations for a policy that would be considered by all levels of government and that would become law. It is only through legislation that we will have an easy flowing, co-ordinated implementation of the plans of the National Capital Commission. If we are ever to see these plans implemented in a continuing, orderly fashion, there must be total agreement between all levels of government. As things stand today, the plans could reach a certain stage and then one of the parties concerned might disagree, be that the province of Ontario, the province of Quebec, the municipal governments or the federal government.

The special committee and the National Capital Commission have done good work, and in the coming weeks and months I hope we can agree on a formula that will ensure the smooth implementation of all their planning. When debate is concluded, whether in this House, in the provincial legislatures of Ontario and Quebec, or in the city councils, the point must come when discussion is halted once and for all and we move on the irrevocable implementation of the plans. It is my considered and humble opinion that that is the only way we will see real progress. This is the only assurance of continued action with respect to the implementation of those plans, hours, money, sweat, equity, and everything else that goes into hard work. The commissioners, representing the various provinces and two territories, have brought forward the views of all Canadians as to what they might like to see in order to expand and improve the National Capital Commission. The commission and its chairman have done good work, Mr. Speaker.

I fear that if we continue in the same vein as in the past there is the danger of disagreement, and so we will be back to square one and will have to face starting all over again. I am convinced that until such time as we can devise ways and means of reaching general agreement between all levels of government, and that until such time as we have suitable legislation, we will be subjected to the whim and last minute changes imposed by one level of government or the other.

I notice that the hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton (Mrs. Pigott) has just entered the chamber so I will briefly restate my comments when I enjoined her to withdraw her motion, and suggested that she might have considered doing that some time ago since she is a member of the special committee. I wanted to state once again, in her presence that she has made a worth-while contribution to the special committee.

Most of the work of the committee is complete. It only remains for the co-chairmen, Senator Marchand and the hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Stewart), to review the work that has been done, and for members from this House and from the other place to reach consensus on the official report to this House.

[Mr. Harquail.]

One order agreed to by members of the House was that the special committee should visit Washington. The visit was postponed but, as I understand it, the matter is under review and the organizers are consulting with officials in Washington regarding the details. I am under the impression that once this is completed, and once we have availed ourselves of the opportunity of consultations with the officials in that capital, we will then be in a position to have the special committee consider a full and final report to the House.

● (1712)

With respect to concerns that might be expressed by the hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton, as she knows there is a meeting tomorrow morning where the minister and the chairman of the commission, as well as other officials, will be in attendance to answer any and all questions at the time of the consideration of the main estimates. I would recommend to the mover of the motion and other members who have an interest in this matter that they avail themselves of this opportunity of being in attendance at the committee meeting tomorrow morning when the minister and the officials of the NCC will be quite prepared to answer their questions on the subject—

Mr. Paproski: He won't have time to talk about this subject.

Mr. Harquail: There is one other comment of interest concerning the NCC that I wish to make at this time. The National Capital Commission has something in the order of 1,000 employees and spends approximately \$30 million a year. As I have stated earlier, it carries out its work in a very commendable and efficient fashion.

Mr. Paproski: It never pays its taxes to Ottawa.

Mr. Harquail: Apart from some of the commentary that is coming from someplace in this House, I would just conclude, Mr. Speaker, by stating that there is in existence in the mandate within the special committee—there are other means within the Treasury Board—means whereby the NCC is accountable in every respect to the government. I have no concern in this regard. I am sure other speakers who will follow me this afternoon will have something to offer.

[Translation]

Mr. Gaston Clermont (Gatineau): Mr. Speaker, during the private members' hour on January 30, 1978, we had before us the following motion which was introduced by the hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton (Mrs. Pigott) and which read as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the National Capital Commission is not sufficiently accountable to those who live in the national capital region or the people of Canada, and exercises its powers in an arbitrary manner without adequate consultation with other levels of government and that, as a just step, there should be a permanent standing joint committee on the national capital region.

Mr. Speaker, the act establishing the National Capital Commission has been in existence since 1958, that is for 20 years. During the period, a lot of things have changed and it is