

*art Phillips*

Welcome to the first Annual Policy Convention of TEAM. This is not only TEAM's first policy convention, it is the first time in the history of Vancouver, or for that matter any Canadian city, that the citizens have been involved in policy making to this extent. We have here a glimpse of the future course of all political organizations where involvement will be more than just a cliché.

Many years ago our city had a great spirit of adventure and feeling for the future. As far back as 1888, just two years after the fire, Stanley Park was set aside for future generations to enjoy. Although the population was only 5,000 at the time, Mayor David Oppenheimer said, "the realization of our most cherished dreams is not far distant when our phoenix-like young terminal city will attain that prominent rank amongst her sisters on the Pacific Coast to which she is entitled."

That spirit of optimism lasted for several decades but somehow it was lost in the depression and the war years that followed. More recently, however, the city has started to come to life again. TEAM reflects this reawakening and is contributing to it.

Nearly a million people now live in Greater Vancouver and the population is going to continue to grow. It will probably reach two million in the next twenty-five years. The question is - will the city get better as it gets bigger? We say it should. But it will be no time for the hand wringers - those who feel it is inevitable that the future will bring more crowded beaches, worse traffic jams, higher crime rates and dirtier air. We say it can be better.

In the last few months, several hundred dedicated citizens have been working on TEAM's policy committees to make this a better city. While the range of subjects discussed was very wide, almost every committee was concerned with three major issues. One was the need for a regional approach to our problems. It has become abundantly clear that we cannot confine our thinking to the borders of the city of Vancouver.

A second was the concern for the quality of life in our city. I think most Vancouverites share the belief that the city is for people to live in and enjoy as well as work. It should offer excitement and variety and opportunity as well as privacy and breathing space for all its citizens. We believe that it can.

Finally, our committees concluded that the citizens must feel involved to a greater extent in their own government. There must be contact and feed-back between city hall and the people. Right now most people feel alienated. They would like to contribute, but they are frustrated and this is a tragic waste of talent.

Our policy committees were made up of individuals from widely different backgrounds and circumstances. Anyone who wished to be on any committee was automatically included. Some sceptics predicted that policy committees, created in such a random manner would break down in squabbling and disagreement or fritter away their time on trivia. Instead, they found themselves working together productively.

The whole exercise proved that our city need not feel divided, east versus west or any other way. Everyone wants roughly the same things. Unfortunately, some politicians will probably continue to play one group against another for personal advantage but I think the citizens will realize that we can accomplish much more by working together.

Tonight and tomorrow you will be shaping the future of our city. Your task will be to deliberate carefully and wisely to provide the policy basis for TEAM's vision of Vancouver. Because of your work I am sure that Vancouver in the 70's will finally live up to its great potential.