

I think we have to have machinery that will break down this reticence that exists between the three levels of Government in approaching the housing question. We are evading at present the responsibility for closing the gap.

Senator WALL: Let us accept that. Specifically, that initiative cannot be taken at the municipal levels; it might be taken at the provincial level, but finally we end up at the national level. C.N.H.C. is an independent Government corporation—is it to take this initiative? It could not do it; it has a specific function. It must, therefore, be a department of the Government or some branch of Government who will take the initiative of setting up this machinery.

Mr. BEECROFT: I think if this problem were injected into the discussion that is going to take place, according to announcements, between the Federal Government and the representatives of the municipalities, we could expect some sympathetic interest in the idea from both levels, without having the federal Government take an undue amount of initiative in it.

The CHAIRMAN: Senator Robertson?

Senator ROBERTSON: Mr. Chairman, I think the question I had in mind has been largely answered in response to Senator Wall's question. I note that the witness in his testimony used from time to time the expression municipal government and federal Government, and seemed to ignore the provincial governments. I had a question on that point: I could not understand why the provincial governments were not brought into this more than the witness seemed to be bringing them in. After all, I would think that the responsibility of the federal Government in this field would be by way of assistance to the provinces to assist the municipalities. If you are going to by-pass the provinces, you are going to be in trouble, or I miss my guess.

Mr. BEECROFT: Mr. Chairman, I welcome the question from Senator Robertson. It makes me wish I could have made the brief even longer than it is. It omits to say that one of the important parts of the program of the Community Planning Association of Canada is to try to persuade the provincial governments to take the leadership in these matters which really relate to urban planning in the broad sense; and since the municipalities are the particular responsibility of the provinces, as the Senator suggests, the responsibility for taking the initiative, for example in getting good housing surveys conducted, helping the municipality to set up administrative devices necessary to do good planning, get sound regional or metropolitan Government, these have to be done on the initiative of the province. One of the suggestions we are making, and I think we will be heard to make if often in the future, is that every province of Canada simply must have a high-level planning system attached to the premier of the province.

Senator WALL: For example, Mr. Beecroft, if I may pinpoint that: I noted on page 2 you used these words, "to provide housing directly for medium and low income people in the many situations where it will undoubtedly be required". Underneath that I wrote "provinces?". It appeared to me that it is imperative that the provincial governments should show greater leadership, because they are in the first place in closer contact with the municipalities. Would you concur in that general thesis?

Senator CRERAR: The witness a short time ago used the phrase "sound housing policy". How would you define such a policy?

Mr. BEECROFT: Well, the general definition of it here is that it is going to be a policy that will definitely close the gap between need and supply within a reasonable number of years, and will proceed to meet certain annual targets for the class of citizens who require housing.