

Housing Prices

provided by the federal government. Assistance will also be provided for the improvement of normal municipal services and the removal of noxious uses in residential areas.

Perhaps just as important as the improvements that will take place in housing and all other facilities in neighbourhood improvement areas will be the part that the citizens themselves will play. The residents of such areas will be involved in the identification of neighbourhoods, the planning for action and the implementation of the plan. This, we believe, is the proper way to deal with our cities.

It is our intention to conserve the residential neighbourhoods which play an important part in the lives of our citizens. It is our intention to upgrade substandard housing to decent, adequate levels, and I for one am confident that this kind of action will halt the deterioration of residential neighbourhoods into the slum conditions which plague urban places. So let us not talk about urban renewal in old and outdated terms; let us talk about the things we can and will do to improve the lives of our inner city residents.

A great many concerned Canadians, both inside and outside this House, are worried about the rapidly increasing cost of residential land in many communities. The National Housing Act has for many years provided assistance to provinces and municipalities for the assembly of land for residential purposes—indeed, the federal government has provided more than \$30 million for this purpose in Ontario during the past four years, which has met every request that the province has made for such funds.

We recognize that public intervention in land banking and the assembly of land may well have a beneficial effect on residential land cost. We shall be introducing legislation to broaden the provisions of the act to make it possible for provinces and municipalities to play an active part in providing land, not only for our growing urban areas but for new communities. We are not naïve enough to think that this can be done with a revolving fund of \$100 million as was stated by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) in a recent speech in Toronto. I assure him that much more is needed and much more will be provided than a revolving fund of \$100 million for land banking purposes. I can assure the hon. member for Spadina (Mr. Ryan), who may be speaking next, that there will be lots of money in the fund.

All members know that the Canadian portion of the Great Lakes and the international section of the St. Lawrence River are in Ontario. Members know, as well, that this government has entered into an agreement with the province of Ontario which will provide for a concerted effort to eliminate the pollution in the lower Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River. This Canada-Ontario agreement is part of a larger Canada-United States agreement whereby the province of Ontario, the government of Canada, the states bordering the Great Lakes and the United States government can jointly eliminate pollution from this great asset.

• (1610)

It has been agreed that the government of Canada will provide during the next five years \$165 million in loans to the province of Ontario and Ontario communities border-

[Mr. Weatherhead.]

ing these waters, of which \$42 million will be forgiven as soon as the work is completed. This, of course, is in addition to the work being done in other Ontario communities for which loans of more than \$90 million have been made under the National Housing Act by this government during the last four years, and of which \$22.5 million was forgiven.

Despite the record—for which no apology is needed—this government is not afraid of innovation. During the past three years the federal government, through Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, has invested more than \$300 million in innovative projects to find new ways of serving Canadians better. We have experimented on a large scale with assisting lower income people to become homeowners, and we have found ways of providing home ownership to thousands of Canadian families who had no hope of finding housing through the private market mechanism. We will be hearing more about this program as the days go by.

We have found ways to serve old and unattached men and others who require rooming-house accommodation in urban areas. The Braida high-rise rooming-house project on Sherbrooke Street, Toronto, is an example of this. We have worked diligently with native groups, both Métis and Indians, to seek ways of assisting them to solve their housing problems. We have supported co-operative housing societies and will continue to seek new ways of making these more effective. We have worked with citizen groups, non-profit housing corporations and the building industry to examine every possible proposal that holds promise of serving Canadians better.

Some of these activities have involved risks that private enterprise simply cannot take and because of this not all experimentation has been successful: experimentation involves risk. But as a result of this experience and far reaching studies into the housing problems of the defenseless will come the most enlightened proposals for amendment to the National Housing Act that have been seen in this House for a generation.

Mr. S. Perry Ryan (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, in the past 25 years Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation programs have built about 250,000 housing units for the 1,500,000 low-income families in this country. It has therefore met less than one-sixth of the need, and some of the units were not well conceived nor well built.

The hon. member for York Centre (Mr. Walker), who although not in his seat may be behind the curtains, mentioned earlier in this debate that nowhere in Toronto had he seen any limited dividend housing projects that were not satisfactory in every respect. I should like to direct to his attention the Richmond Square project which lies between Richmond Street West and Queen Street West at Niagara, in my riding. There is a \$2 million complex standing idle since last April when it sank about a foot into the ground, causing a depression 13 storeys high which the local people call the "Trudeau depression". That is just one example of what limited dividend housing has done for the landscape in Toronto.

I understand that Professor Charney in his report says something to the effect that the Main Square project at Danforth and Main Street, which is close to the riding of