

National Housing Act

for flexibility in the act to provide for the needs of our senior citizens; but I rise particularly to ask the minister a question. It has not to do with policy; it has more to do with purpose so far as this act generally is concerned.

In the city of Trail for a good number of years they have been plagued by the Canadian Pacific Railway track running through the centre of the city. Consideration has been given throughout the years to changing this situation, particularly in the Rossland avenue area. Plans have been considered for the redevelopment of this area, the relocation of the yards and the freight sheds required for the business people of the district in one particular place, and the removal of the necessary houses and their transfer to another location. At the present time this problem is being considered on the basis of financial co-operation between the city and Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company, with the Canadian Pacific Railway more or less looking after its own track removal and things of that sort.

Would a redevelopment scheme of that nature come under the terms of the amendments to this act at the present time? I am speaking of the relocation of the yards, the relocation of those persons who have to be moved from certain areas because of the poor type of buildings and the necessity to move them, and so on.

Mr. Winters: Mr. Chairman, there is a specific clause in this bill, namely clause 23, under which I think this could appropriately be discussed. I would refer my hon. friend to it so that he can peruse it and have its provisions in mind when we reach it. I think that a reading of the clause will answer some of the questions he himself has raised. If it does not, then I shall be glad to deal with it when we come to the section. We are on a specific section now, namely section 1, having to do with home extension loans, and we were diverted into a discussion of housing for aged citizens in Canada. I have just been asked to ensure that Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation does not become too rigid in its application of government policy. I can assure hon. members it will not.

I remind the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra, who is mistaken in some of his statements—I am not too concerned about that because the general principles are the same—that when he says there is a proposal before us, there is not. This has been a matter of discussion, but no specific proposal has been put before us so far. The situation, as I said in reply to him, is that Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation as well as myself

believe it is quite in order to house a percentage of senior citizens in any federal-provincial project. Generally speaking, and without being rigid about it, we think it is all right that about 20 per cent of the tenants of any such project should be senior citizens, and that has been a part of the policy of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. I have statistics which show that, as at the present time, the total percentage of senior citizens in relation to the total population—and when I say “senior citizens” I mean those over 65 years of age—is 7.73 per cent. As against that we are agreeing that it is quite in order to house up to 20 per cent of senior citizens in a federal-provincial project.

At the same time we say that if anybody else wishes to show the initiative that so many already have shown to develop limited dividend companies and obtain a loan from Central Mortgage and Housing, then it is their responsibility to house anybody they wish within the appropriate income range. They are simply the borrower, and they have all the rights and privileges of administering the project as they see fit and of housing anybody they deem desirable.

Therefore rather than discriminate against the senior citizens, which the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra might have implied without actually saying so, I think quite the reverse is the case. I am quite sure that my colleague the Minister of National Health and Welfare could make quite a convincing statement and assert to the satisfaction of all members of the committee that the senior citizens in Canada have not been discriminated against but, on the contrary, the government has gone a long way in meeting the needs of this very worthy group of Canadian citizens.

Mr. Green: Mr. Chairman, that is all very well, but here we have one specific case. If the minister did not get a written application from the city of Vancouver, at least his officials have been discussing this particular project with the city for a matter of eight months. I am told by reliable people vitally interested in housing, and working on a community service basis on this problem, that this project has been submitted to the government; a 130-unit housing project for senior citizens at 47th avenue and Knight road in Vancouver under section 36 of the act.

Now, there is an actual application; and there is a possibility for 130 senior citizens to benefit if the project goes through. What I should like to know from the minister is whether or not that particular project can be approved by the dominion, or is he going