

another law known as the law of administrative concern. That law says that administrative concern varies inversely with the square of the distance between the administrator and the problem. Putting it another way, as the mayor of Vancouver said at one time, it is 3,000 miles from Vancouver to Ottawa but 30,000 miles from Ottawa to Vancouver. The premier of British Columbia recently responded to sentiments underlying that law when he proposed that British Columbia should take over chunks of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. He felt that British Columbia was physically closer to those areas and could do a better job of solving their problems.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I understood there was general agreement that at this stage we were to discuss the housing items in the estimates. There may have been a bit of confusion or misunderstanding about the details, but it was agreed to deal with housing at this time:

Technically speaking, we are on clause 2 of the bill, but we agreed to talk about housing. The Minister of Transport is here, and we all know that he is here for that purpose. I wonder, therefore, how we are getting into regional development and linguistic problems under this item, in view of our agreement.

The Chairman: It was also my understanding that there was such agreement. However, that agreement resulted from a statement of the President of the Privy Council and it is up to hon. members themselves to honour it. If the hon. member wishes to discuss something else on clause 2, I do not see how he can be ruled out of order. However if there is an agreement of the house, I think hon. members ought to observe it.

Mr. Howard (Okanagan Boundary): Mr. Chairman, I knew we were dealing with clause 2 this evening but I was not consulted about anything else. I was talking on clause 2 and dealing with regional development.

Mr. Stanfield: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I thought we were to have orderly discussion. It was agreed we would talk about housing. The minister is here to give his words of wisdom. I thought what was agreed was perfectly clear.

The Chairman: Possibly, it might facilitate matters if the hon. member for Okanagan

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Boundary were not to talk about regional development. An understanding does exist. It was not an order of the house but, rather, a consensus arrived at by house leaders. I know the hon. member is within his rights in raising any subject under clause 2; yet it seems to me, in the interest of orderly procedure and if the hon. member for Okanagan Boundary is agreeable, the committee could deal with the matter of housing and defer the matter of regional development. Is that agreeable to the hon. member?

Mr. Howard (Okanagan Boundary): I will bow to your wishes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak in this debate. I do not wish to mislead the house and say we have a crisis in housing—oh, no. But what we do have is about as close to being a crisis as can be imagined. When we think of housing, Mr. Chairman, we are thinking about the quality of life of our Canadian people. Nearly half our 21 million Canadians are under 25 years old. In view of this, it is necessary that we consider the problem, irrespective of what the minister has stated. He does not think the possibility of owning one's home is something with which we can contend. I am sure the average Canadian wants the opportunity to own his own little plot of land with a 30 or 50 foot frontage so that when the frustrations of this complex life reach him he can sit on his porch or in his own backyard. I maintain this is one of the prime objectives of the average Canadian, particularly those in the age bracket to which I just referred, who are thinking of buying homes. I fail to understand how these people can buy a home even with a salary of \$8,000 or \$9,000 a year.

• (8:10 p.m.)

I have a copy of "Commercial Letter" published by the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce which deals with the population growth of this country. Because of the great impact of the population growth, the government must make drastic changes in its housing policy. I quote from "Urban Transportation in Canada":

Canada's historical reputation is that of a country of wide open spaces and a sparse, mainly rural population. Yet today, roughly half of all Canadians are living in metropolitan areas with populations of over 100,000.

This proportion of urban dwellers has increased dramatically since 1951, when it was slightly more than one-third of the total population. While the