

**Mr. Blenkarn:** It has been suggested that speculation in land has driven prices up to unrealistic levels. What has happened, in fact, is that the cost of the only land which can be serviced, or is likely to be serviced in a relatively short period of time, has been driven up to unrealistic levels in the areas around our great metropolitan centres. If more land were rapidly placed on the market, the probability is that those who hold parcels close to the cities would no longer be able to ask what amount to extortionate prices for them. The prices offered would be less; the holders would be obliged to cut their prices in order to sell their land.

If it could be clearly demonstrated that land is capable of development, municipalities should encounter no problem, particularly in the Province of Ontario, under the Assessment Act, in making arrangements to tax the land at its market value thus forcing speculative holders either to sell or to develop it. No individual should be allowed to take advantage of the public by holding land off the market indefinitely without, at least, paying a penalty by way of tax charges. If, as a result of block funding to the municipalities in respect to part of the development cost land is put on the market, the general price of land will fall. The government should take seriously the representations made to it by the provinces at the housing conference last January to which the minister referred.

Finally, I want to say this. It is unconscionable that shelter should bear a tax, as it does. Food bears no tax. Even cocktail mix bears no tax. If shelter is to bear tax, the revenue from that tax should be rebated to those who bear the costs of development, that is to say, to the municipalities and provinces where development is taking place. Such a rebate, such a block funding to the municipalities and to the provinces, would drive down the cost of land, and that is the major problem. The federal government has declared it is making \$100 million available for the purchase of land. Mr. Speaker, there is no shortage of land in Canada. We are the one country in the world which has an abundance of the commodity called land. The minister's whole approach to housing is, density, density, build the buildings higher, crowd the people closer together and make this country like Holland. The solution is not density, the solution is a really concrete attempt by the government to put forward a solid philosophy that says my children and your children should have a right to buy a home and raise a family.

**Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview):** After hearing the speech of the hon. member for Peel South (Mr. Blenkarn), Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether I should laugh or cry. It is bad enough to see the Liberals in power, but I just shudder to think what would happen were the Tories in power.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gilbert:** The hon. member said the Liberals have the problem of density, density, density. But the Tories have the problem of dense, dense, dense. He would have us believe that the people of Ontario enjoy the finest housing in all the world. Let me remind him, Mr. Speaker, that a great many people in Ontario would have no place to lay their heads if the federal government did not take a strong initiative in the provision of public housing. Even now, the waiting list for such housing in Toronto is

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approximately 18,000. Yet the hon. member says that everything is well in Ontario because the land is controlled by the private developers who have the private land banks. He says: please do not encroach on these boys because if you let them participate with the private land bank the prices of land will just drop and drop. Well, this is complete nonsense. I just wanted to tell the House that this is the way I feel after listening to the hon. member for Peel South.

Last night I heard the minister pontificate on the government's proposals regarding housing. He used a fiery rhetoric with an anglican solemnity which almost impressed me sufficiently to think he had just returned from Mount Sinai with a new set of tablets to create the new Jerusalem in housing for Canada. But after reading his remarks I realize that this just is not so. I now realize what he is really trying to do. First, he is guilty of housing hokery-pokery. Second, he is perpetuating a housing charade with regard to the housing needs of Canadians. Why do I say he is guilty of housing hokery-pokery? We talked in the past in terms of urban renewal. Now he talks in terms of NIP, standing for neighbourhood improvement program. In the past we talked about home improvement. Now, he talks about RRAP which stands for residential rehabilitation assistance purchase program. In the past we talked about home purchase assistance. Now, the minister talks about AHOP, the assistance for home ownership program. Of course, I guess it sounds very smooth, very sophisticated. But what it amounts to is a lot of housing hokery-pokery.

The minister is also guilty of performing a housing charade. One cannot criticize the philosophy set forth in the Hellyer task force report which said every Canadian is entitled to clean, warm shelter, or the statement of the Canadian Social Development Council that every person is entitled to housing as a basic human right whether he can pay for it or not.

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These are the philosophies that have been developed across this country, and last night the minister added to them by saying that it is the aim of this government to provide good housing at reasonable cost as a social goal and government obligation. We cannot quarrel with that philosophy, but we can quarrel with the performance of the government. We recall that in 1968, when the Liberals swept back into power and set up the Hellyer task force, this was a time when we had the great "participatory democracy" theme. The hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer), the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies), Robert Campeau and two others travelled across the country to ascertain the needs of Canadians for housing accommodation. I should like to cite the four conclusions or recommendations that came forth from that group.

First of all, they said that the private market can serve the needs of Canadians for housing. That is absolutely wrong. If that were the case, we would not need bodies such as CMHC, the Ontario Housing Corporation and the many other housing corporations across the country to take care of our housing needs. Secondly, they said we should free interest rates. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that interest rates were frozen by the government. The hon. member for Trinity, a Liberal at the time, was a