

National Housing Act

means of assisting municipalities to provide fully serviced, residential lots in small urban communities.

The objectives of Bill C-133 still look like noble gestures, with the purpose of bringing good housing within the reach of more Canadians. However, I would point out that the government's duty to rural dwellers is non-specific in the bill. The only possible attention given to these persons would lie in a small "I" liberal interpretation of the new communities, neighbourhood improvement and rehabilitation of existing housing proposals. However, it must certainly be assumed that money will not be poured into these districts in view of great pressure from the urban areas and, of course, the trend to urban living.

I would also point out that a beneficial housing policy cannot be developed in isolation from other programs. The government still has no full strategy for urban growth. For example, the failure of the government to develop an effective transportation policy will ultimately result in the failure of its housing strategy. This is one more argument in favour of transferring a good deal of new housing activity to the rural areas where roads are already built but the same services are not demanded. Many of the communities are situated along railroad lines, where rapid transit could be utilized if only the railways would provide it, rather than discontinuing trains and doing their best to tear up the railway lines so they can never be forced to go back to transporting people. Urban developers are told that in their price of land must be included the cost of recreation facilities, park lands, arenas, recreation centres and so on. These facilities are already available in many small communities crying for housing.

If I have one priority as a backbencher in this House of Commons it is this, that I will endeavour to be a voice for rural Canada. I have said this before and I will continue to say it. I served as the head of a municipality for a quarter of a century and certainly know what is required in small towns and villages. I get a little weary of hearing about "urban this and urban that". Again I stress that a special department of rural affairs should be set up, or an ombudsman appointed to speak on behalf of the rest of Canada. As I look around this chamber, I wonder if it would not be an excellent idea to have a large map of Canada available to let some of these urban Members of Parliament see just how much of Canada they represent. Take for example the map of Ontario. It reminds me somewhat of a chicken. The chicken's head and part of its neck comprises southern Ontario, and the rest is the great rural area and northern Ontario.

• (1540)

The hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams), our housing critic, when speaking most eloquently on Thursday night, stated that the metropolitan Toronto area would require at least \$73 million of the 100 million dollars allocated for any one year for land assembly. He went on to state that this would leave only \$27 million for the other cities, Montreal, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Halifax. This certainly is dividing it like a Christian, Mr. Speaker, and you know what it leaves for the rest of rural Canada, about three-eighths of five-eighths of you can guess what.

[Mr. Darling.]

I understand, from what I read in the paper this past weekend, that Toronto is now demanding 100,000 lots, and the price is at least \$20,000 a lot. I am not very good at multiplying, but I thought the total cost came to \$200 million. However, I had it checked by one of my colleagues and he said it is \$2 billion. Now, Mr. Speaker, that is a hell of a lot of money. If you read the Toronto *Star*, every weekend you will see houses advertised at \$41,000 to \$80,000 in Oakville's Charmwood, and so on, and a Mississauga townhouse at \$30,000. This is decentralization says the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner). My gosh, we could build I don't know how many thousands of homes in rural Canada with that amount of money and let the development of Toronto stop where it is. I get sick and tired of seeing all these advertisements.

Mr. Speaker, again I am hoping that hon. members on this side here, as well as hon. members on the government side, will say that Toronto and Montreal have grown too damn big, period, and, therefore, we will have to look to other areas to decentralize. By "decentralize", I do not mean moving out to Mississauga or up as far as Thornhill. I am not quite so familiar with that great octopus, Montreal, but I understand it extends for 20 or 30 miles. I intend to stretch our sights a great deal farther in order to try to get industry into this area and then housing along with it. Again, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much and I hope that my few remarks will be given consideration by this House.

Mr. Jim Fleming (York West): If I may at the outset, while the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Darling) is still with us in this Chamber, make brief reference to the fact that I had hoped, when I came here as a new member only a few months ago, that perhaps Toronto would no longer be the favourite whipping dog of all other parts of Canada. As I say, I had hoped that practice had faded, and I am sad to see that it has not. Indeed, we have problems and I hope I can convince you, and the other members through you Mr. Speaker, that members from Toronto also share a concern and responsibility for rural Canada, and a very genuine concern. I had made a note, before the hon. member made reference to what seemingly was an unfair proportion of assistance being given to Toronto—at least that is what I gathered from his comments, Mr. Speaker—to make sure that I refer to the fact that I come from rural Ontario roots so I share the great concern of the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka about the condition of housing in rural Ontario.

Borderline poverty people and lower middle-income people in our cities are doing much better in housing in finding accommodation, if it is not housing of their own, despite the fact there remain many very critical problems. Meanwhile, many of our farmers working very hard to earn a minimum wage find themselves in housing that would never be accepted within an urban area in Canada. Certainly, a great deal more has to be done in that area and I want to make that very clear as someone from Toronto, Mr. Speaker.

Now, in referring to Bill C-133, I want to cover, if I can first, two or three basic points and then go into some detail, if I may. First, after going over all the material that was made available to me, as well as my own awareness of the housing problems in a suburban riding such as my