

Young people cannot afford to borrow money. Although their salaries have increased each year in dollar terms, they do not earn enough to qualify for a mortgage loan. They cannot afford houses. Consequently they are trapped in these highrise buildings. I agree that some people prefer to live in highrise buildings. That is their privilege. I am not speaking about them. I am speaking about the people who are trapped in these buildings, who want a home but cannot afford one.

What is happening in our area? The Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Danson) is fighting with the regional government of this area over where development is to take place. The state of affairs in the national capital is dreadful, but the minister is arguing, fighting and threatening the regional municipality. He wants to get his own way with land use planning. I am the last to deny that the federal government does not have a unique responsibility in the national capital area. But that does not mean that the minister should force the National Capital Commission to do as he wishes, or that the federal government should ignore the wishes of the locally elected municipal government. If I may say so, because this area is the centre of gravity of the federal government, the minister has an even greater responsibility for solving the housing needs of Ottawa than he has, perhaps, for any other area.

● (1620)

While we are arguing as to whether the development in Carlsbad Springs ought to go ahead, or the development in the southwest quadrant of the national capital area, there are people sitting waiting for houses. There are thousands and thousands of potential units in the southwest quadrant of this city.

What does the minister have in answer to the regional municipality that wants to develop there in terms of its own official plan? He takes the cheap course and says the regional municipality is on the side of the bad guys, the developers. That is hardly consistent with what I regard to be the position of the Minister of State for Urban Affairs in terms of development of the national capital area. While this fight is going on, people are waiting for houses.

Some people seem to forget—and there are a couple of things the hon. member for Mississauga (Mr. Abbott) did not know, let alone forget—is that the land in the Carlsbad Springs area was purchased by the Ontario government as a land bank program, not for immediate development but for a program for a period of 20 years. The official plan of the regional municipality says it is to be for future development, yet the Minister of State for Urban Affairs wants to build homes as a Leda Clay monument in Gloucester township, and he wants to build them today. That flies in the face of the wishes of the local people.

There have been a lot of expressions of disrespect toward the minister because of the position he has taken. Rather than continuing this argument, he should sit down and consult in a meaningful way with the local regional officials. It might be a refreshing experience for him.

What is the result of all this? The result is that thousands of lots lie in a state of nature in the southwest quadrant of the city. The housing statistics set by Mayor Greenberg and others in the national capital area are

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going to get worse. Young people and others are going to be trapped against their will in high-rise apartments and townhouses for longer periods than they ought to be. The Minister of State for Urban Affairs and his department are not serving the national capital area well. That is the result of this interesting jurisdictional dispute.

While these people wait for some action, interest rates rise, housing starts fall, mortgage moneys continue to be scarce, and the cost of construction continues to rise. In the meantime I suppose we are going to hear the hon. member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Poulin) announce for the fifth time the beginning of the park in LeBreton Flats. Every once in a while when there is nothing to say, the hon. member for Ottawa Centre trots out another announcement that LeBreton Flats will go ahead.

I do not know why the minister takes this position. I do not know why he feels the only way he can accomplish anything is to carry out an end run around the provinces and municipalities. Surely the local officials have something to say. No federal officer ought to trade compromise and consultation for the questionable tool of confrontation. However, that is what is happening. As a result, housing development is slowing down.

The federal government is saying in the local area, "Play ball or we will not let you use our land for development." That quote has been attributed to the federal government. The minister says, "Play ball or we won't pay the one third cost of servicing as we have done in every other instance." If that is an example of reasonable consultation, I guess I have not seen one before.

One of the arguments that seem to affect this area is the questionable quality of the land. A report was issued a few days ago by De Leuw Cather. I have to admit that the De Leuw Cather report does not say the Carlsbad Springs area is a swamp. However, it does not give it a complete bill of health.

If the De Leuw Cather report says anything, it is that if you can develop in another area then go ahead and do it, because it will be very costly to develop in this area. It will be costly to service the area and to put in foundations. Housing costs will be above the ordinary. There will be some difficulty with regard to providing services within the area. There will be some difficulty in so far as the timing is concerned.

The chairman of the regional municipality put it the best way possible. I quote from an article in the May 16 edition of the *Ottawa Citizen*:

"All I can say is that this is the worst soil in the area," Mr. Coolican said in an interview. "If you are going to find out how you can build on the land, you don't have to do it as a priority."

For some reason unknown to me and so far unexplained, the minister has taken this piece of land, generally regarded by people in the area as one of the worst, if not the worst piece of land, and decided it will be developed immediately in place of available serviced land in the southwest quadrant of the national capital area.

If the minister is making any mistake, it is that he has his role mixed up. The federal government is not the prime developer of land. It ought not to attempt to avoid its responsibility to consult with the provinces and municipalities. If it has any responsibility at all, it is to provide