

Let me contrast that, because the contrast is remarkable, with some of the other things that the government could do with its \$1 for housing. I suggest that for every \$1 the government spends in the servicing of land there would be \$30 or \$40 of benefit as a result of this multiplier effect. Around my own city, the principal block to the construction of a sufficient number of houses for the people who live in the Toronto area is the lack of available serviced land. A dollar of government activity in this area can go very much farther than a dollar of activity in the area of public housing. It is for this reason that I was greatly encouraged to see CMHC recently extend an invitation to the private sector to bring forward unconventional and innovative plans and new ideas for constructing homes for Canadians at reasonable prices. This is a project that I heartily endorse.

To the extent that the government is prepared to make investments in the servicing of land to bring this great multiplier effect to which I have referred into play, it is obvious that there are constitutional considerations which will require the co-operation of the province of Ontario. For this reason, as an elected member from Ontario, I can only hope that all other members of the House will urge the government of Ontario and all provincial governments to seriously consider the initiative that was taken by the minister the other day in recommending the establishment of an urban council to deal precisely with this type of problem where there is a great federal interest in stimulating activity, but where work on the ground can only come about with full provincial and municipal co-operation.

• (4:00 p.m.)

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, when the minister replied he said there was no justification for our dire projections. I sat listening to him, hoping he would say something positive to allay the fears of the House and the country over the serious housing crisis facing Canada. I heard nothing. In fact I heard words that more than justified the pessimism that is felt on all sides of this House, and right across the country, following the government's failure to come to grips with the housing crisis.

I was hoping that the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer) would be in the House. I noticed he was here today and I hoped he would participate in this debate. It is well to recall the famous task force on housing and

urban development which was headed by the minister's predecessor, the member for Trinity, just over a year ago. We remember that task force going all across the country, holding public hearings and seeing first hand the ugly picture of urban and rural poverty.

We read with interest its report. The hon. member for Trinity was so impressed with what he saw in his pilgrimage across the country that he came back to Ottawa firmly resolved that something had to be done, and done immediately. Unfortunately, the government of which he was a member did not agree with the urgency that he felt, and the minister resigned. That was the last positive word we had from the government on housing. It was the last indication of hope, of any suggestion of the government coming to grips with the housing problem and the attendant problems of poverty and unemployment.

It would be well for the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Andras), who is sincere in his intentions, to retrace the steps of his predecessor, to go into the poverty ghettos in our cities and see the way that the poor of Canada live. Oh yes, we hear a great deal from hon. members who represent the large cities about the urban problems of pollution, transportation and recreation. But, Mr. Speaker, what about the more serious problem of the lack of adequate housing?

Today in this proud land of ours there are people living in the most abject poverty, with children who have to be watched constantly for fear of their being bitten by rats. There are people living in our cities who do not have the ordinarily accepted convenience of adequate plumbing facilities. The hon. member for Trinity saw this. He saw it in my city; he saw it in other cities; he saw it in the rural areas of Canada. He was so impressed, or should I say depressed, with what he saw that he felt if the government's just society was to mean anything, something had to be done for Canadians living in substandard housing.

In the declaration of principles that formed the preamble to his report he mentioned that every Canadian should be entitled to clean, warm shelter as a matter of basic human right. I ask the minister how long can the thousands of Canadians who live in urban poverty wait to enjoy what should be this basic Canadian right? As the minister well knows, there are areas in my own city without plumbing facilities, without adequate facilities of any kind. I refer to the area