

Housing Prices

lem involves only 20 houses or thereabouts, CMHC has met with the builder and that considerable improvements have been made as a result of this intervention. As far as we know, the people there are satisfied with the improvements made by the builder. With regard to Deep River, to the knowledge of CMHC there was only one complaint. Here again, CMHC has intervened and the builder has done additional work.

• (1600)

I think we should debate the question of high interest rates at some other time, perhaps when we consider Bill C-209 in the next week or so. We could then consider the idea of the hon. member for Broadview that the interest rate should be 6 per cent. I believe every member of the House would agree it is desirable that the rate should be 6 per cent or less, as long as we can be sure that sufficient money would be going into the investment market from the private sector to enable the houses we need to be built.

The hon. member for Broadview did not tell us how much he thought it would cost in subsidies to reduce the rate to 6 per cent, nor did he give us his ideas as to the way in which sufficient moneys could be secured from the private market if the rate were 6 per cent. Perhaps he will do so when the bill to which I have referred comes up for consideration.

No member of the government or no member of the House need apologize for the extent to which the National Housing Act has served the people of Ontario during the past four years in which this government has been in office. The National Housing Act during this period has financed and made possible the construction of more than 200,000 homes and more than 20,000 hostel beds for the elderly and students, for a total investment of more than \$3,100 million. People in all parts of Ontario in all income ranges, both young and old, have been given the opportunity as never before to provide themselves or be provided with decent housing accommodation.

Of this total investment, more than \$1 billion was made available by the federal government, through Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, to provide 70,000 homes for families of low income and other disadvantaged people, together with 16,500 hostel beds for our elderly people and our students. In the field of subsidized public housing alone, funds have been provided for nearly 40,000 deserving families in 73 Ontario communities, requiring an investment of \$500 million and continuing support for subsidy payments in the amount of \$20 million a year.

The needy of my province have been served to an extent never before though possible, and may I remind hon. members that more housing has been built for low-income families in Ontario during the past four years than in the whole of Canada for the previous quarter-century. The housing record of this government is one of which I am very proud and this pride is shared by all members on this side of the House. This is by no means the full story. The federal government has provided through Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation \$150 million in 74 Ontario communities for new sewage treatment facilities, the assembly of land for housing purposes and the implementation of urban renewal programs.

Let me return to the subject of public housing. We are not only concerned about the rapid expansion of the public housing program to meet the needs of the elderly and families who through no fault of their own do not have access to the products of private enterprise; we are equally concerned about the nature of the housing provided and about its integration into the total community. We are not only concerned about new housing, as important as this may be; we are also concerned about the proper use of the existing housing stock.

In Ontario we provide to the province financial support for the payment of rent supplement subsidies to families to allow them to gain access to private accommodation suitable for their needs. We have shown, and will continue to demonstrate, our willingness to provide every possible opportunity for our needy families to secure good housing. Only yesterday it was announced by the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Basford) that a rent supplement program for Ontario for 1972 has been approved which will provide assistance to 1,100 Ontario families to be placed in privately-owned rental accommodation. This is another example of three levels of government working closely with the private sector to provide accommodation for those in desperate need.

There has been much talk in some quarters about the so-called abandonment of the urban renewal program. May I remind hon. members that during the last two years the federal government has made contributions to urban renewal programs at a higher level than in any preceding years. This has meant that in my province grants of more than \$26 million have been made. A good example of the changing atmosphere of urban renewal is the Trafann Court project in Toronto where the citizens of the area have worked jointly with the city of Toronto to achieve a project acceptable to both the residents of the area and the city.

In general, however, urban renewal as it has been practiced in Canada has been less than perfect. Too often urban renewal meant the destruction of housing occupied by low-income families, to be replaced by large public or private commercial enterprises. Too often have the people who live in urban renewal areas suffered hardship because of the nature of the urban renewal process, and not often enough have the people directly affected by urban renewal had anything to say about the process that affects their daily life in such an important way. Far from abandoning the inner cities, we have been striving to find ways of improving the circumstances of those who live there, without the distortion, degradation and hardship of urban renewal.

As the minister has stated, there will be introduced into this House very soon a proposal relating to the improvement of residential neighbourhoods. This program will provide assistance for homeowners and tenants alike to bring substandard housing in residential neighbourhoods up to a decent, safe and adequate standard. Assistance will be provided in respect of sites for housing for those of low and moderate income and for the provision of open space and land for a wide variety of community facilities. A substantial portion of the capital cost of neighbourhood, recreation and social facilities such as day-care centres, drop-in centres and multi-service centres, will be