

*National Housing Act*

**Mr. Green:** The hon. member has asked me a question. I pointed out that eight months ago the city of Vancouver submitted a plan to the two senior governments, the provincial and dominion governments, for the construction of a 130-unit housing project for senior citizens, and nothing has happened. Mind you, there are other projects in greater Vancouver, some of them financed by churches or service clubs, but here was a case where there was a specific proposal put up which has been stalled and I am trying to find out whether it has been killed and just why this is so. It looks as if the dominion government is responsible.

**Mr. Knight:** I think my city has been more fortunate in that regard. We have not, as my friends suggested, these big places where a great number of people are isolated. Our projects are smaller and are scattered here and there throughout the city. The elderly people themselves are so happy about it. I am quite sure if the minister would follow our suggestion he would find a happy solution to the problem. I know of one particular case where they are just waiting to go out and fill up the subscription list if they could get the amounts made deductible for income tax purposes.

**Mr. Philpott:** Make the contributions through the churches and then take them off income tax.

**Mr. Fleming:** The minister's comments on the point raised by the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra lead me to say something about it. The city of Vancouver has asked that steps be taken under the provisions of section 36 of the housing act to provide housing accommodation for elderly persons. The minister in his statement has taken the position that the proper way to handle a situation of that kind is by resort to the limited dividend housing corporation sections of the act. While on the one hand it is suggested that the provisions of section 36 should be used for the purpose, I take it that the policy view indicated by the minister is that if anything is to be done by way of providing special housing accommodation for elderly citizens it should be done by the use of the limited dividend housing corporation provisions.

The minister raises the further point that the idea of the segregation of elderly persons is not in harmony with the policy of the government in relation to housing for elderly persons. It is quite true that the limited dividend housing corporation provisions of the act have been used in a number of cases to provide housing accommodation for elderly persons. No doubt where that is possible it

[Mr. Knight.]

is a useful way of meeting the need, but it is quite evident that those provisions are not adequate to meet the entire need. There are many places where the local support, financial and otherwise, is not adequate to sustain the incorporation of a limited dividend corporation for such purposes. I would join my colleagues the hon. members for Vancouver-Quadra and Royal in urging that use should be made of the provisions of section 36 in such cases.

I cannot follow the minister's argument in relation to segregation of elderly persons. There certainly could be some forms of segregation that would be quite intolerable if applied to housing accommodation constructed under the provisions of section 36 or any other provisions of the act. "Segregation" is a baneful word and has many nasty connotations that I am sure are not in the minds of any of the hon. members in this house, but there surely is no reason in principle why housing accommodation should not be constructed specially for the use of elderly persons. I do urge that there should be an abandonment of any rigidity in the policy of the government in this regard. I do not think it is a case for a rigid policy at all. It is rather a case for the application of a policy designed to make the provisions of the act as effective as possible for meeting the needs that parliament recognized in enacting the provisions.

The needs of elderly persons are in many areas the most acute needs, and particularly those who have nothing to provide for their subsistence except the old age pension. I think the minister will agree that in the case of such deserving persons, if we are to wait until there are enough local resources and enough local initiative to make use of the limited dividend provisions of the act, then such persons are going to continue to suffer and will not have any opportunity of living in decency in their declining years.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I associate myself with the remarks of my colleagues and urge that the department and its agent, Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, should not allow rigidity to characterize their approach to needs of this kind. The need is there; the need is paramount in the consideration of parliament. Parliament is not going to be niggardly or carping in its approach to questions of this kind. Let there not be rigidity because, it seems to me, in the face of considered requests such as those which come from the city council of Vancouver, what is needed is an understanding and a flexible approach, not a rigid one.

**Mr. Herridge:** Mr. Chairman, briefly I want to support the pleas of the previous speakers