

*Housing Prices*

The amendments will also give expression to the government's policy of conserving and rehabilitating good usable housing, consistent with our view that the public concern must be for the entire housing stock—the old, as well as the new. We have heard discussed today the need to keep in our housing stock old housing and to make it good housing. The act's provisions for assistance in the public assembly of land will be extended and strengthened to make this program more useful to provinces and municipalities for land development and the creation of new communities. I observe the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) in the House and I am complimented by his presence. The other day he was speaking in Toronto to the Urban Development Institute, but I had some difficulty following his speech. He spoke of the need for land assembly. Our amendments will go far beyond what he was proposing in speaking to the Urban Development Institute.

Specifically, the amendments will increase the range of choice available to low income people with regard to the kind of home they live in and the kind of tenure by which they occupy it. The non-profit housing provisions of the act will be made more generous to encourage the church groups, service clubs and similar organizations who sponsor this kind of accommodation. New measures will be proposed to provide financial assistance in the form of loans and matching federal-provincial subsidies for low income people who wish to own their own homes. We intend to give these people the opportunity of purchasing their own homes and having that pride of ownership that goes with the purchase of a home.

Other assistance in a similar form will be available to help rehabilitate housing for people of low and moderate incomes. The neighbourhood improvement program arises out of the need to replace the urban renewal program which is being phased out. The new program, with its emphasis on conservation, improvement, repair and rehabilitation, is also directed mainly at low income and moderate income people and the neighbourhoods in which they live. Subject to an agreement with each participating province, the federal government will share the cost of acquiring land for open space, community facilities, low income housing, providing day care centres, drop-in centres and similar community services. We will also pay half the cost of conducting meetings, surveys and other ways of ensuring the participation of the residents themselves in these proposals of conservation and neighbourhood improvement. This legislation is in its final drafting stages. I am happy that the opposition wants the legislation immediately and I shall be delighted, of course, to listen this afternoon to the suggestions hon. members make with regard to what should be in the legislation. I hope ideas will be forthcoming.

I have mentioned the provincial and municipal governments as important partners in our housing enterprises. We are not going to solve the housing problems of Canada unless there is complete co-operation and co-ordination between the federal, provincial and municipal governments. For this reason, senior officials of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation and of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs have visited every province and the territories, meeting with ministers and their officials, to outline the proposed amendments and to invite their

views. In most cases, municipal officials also attended, with the concurrence of the provincial governments. So far their response has been encouraging and I feel there is a sufficient degree of understanding to warrant my bringing legislation before the House very soon. I think it is also the right of Members of Parliament to see these proposals and to know what the government is planning at a very early date.

I should emphasize, however, that these meetings are only the first in a continuing exchange of views which will permit us jointly to deal with all of the necessary regulations and administrative details which will ensure that the programs are delivered efficiently and effectively. The objective of this series of meetings with the provinces must be to try and agree, if need be, on dealing with the nature of the regulations made under the act, the implementation process and the administrative process of the federal government's housing program. I assure the provinces that this kind of discussion will be had on such matters. What we are seeking to develop as a result of this legislation is a flexible range of instruments so that the provinces and their housing agencies as well as the municipalities will have a choice of housing instruments to pick from in order to solve their particular housing problems.

As I have suggested to the provincial ministers, these meetings are more than just an opportunity to discuss important legislation of mutual concern. We see them also as a commitment on our part to a long-range process of tri-level consultation between governments, not just about housing but about the whole range of urban affairs. The hon. member for Halifax-East Hants discussed this when he talked of the whole process of urbanization and many of the matters mentioned by Professor Lithwick in his report on urban Canada.

This is a policy to which my ministry has been committed since its inception and one which I heartily endorse. One of the roles for which my ministry was instituted, and one which I have been energetically pursuing since I was appointed, is to create the mechanisms, and the atmosphere, within which all levels of government in Canada and the private sector can work together in the interests of achieving a healthy and satisfying urban life. It is evident that the scope and complexity of urban problems are beyond the capacity of any one level of government, federal, provincial or municipal, and, indeed, beyond the capacity of government alone.

This is why I was gratified two weeks ago to be able to announce preliminary agreement on the first national conference of the three levels of government on urban issues, to be held in mid-November. I was also able to announce agreement between the preliminary spending committee composed of myself, the Treasurer of Ontario on behalf of all provinces and the mayor of Hull on behalf of the municipalities of Canada in which we agreed that such a tri-level conference should be held. This process of a tri-level conference is the first step of a procedure by which I confidently expect we will provide a way for all governments whose decisions affect the urban environment to talk to each other, to compare policies and programs, and to begin to define common goals for urban Canada. In a speech the other day the Leader of the