

National Housing Act

money from the government under the Municipal Improvements Assistance Act at 2 per cent they would be able to carry on. Then he goes on to say this:

You are most likely aware of the town planning group in Ottawa and the efforts in the various provinces. This is largely building for the future. With the abundance of space in Canada this group is endeavouring to establish less crowded cities and towns.

However, once we spread out a residential area we increase the costs. It is useless being idealistic on one hand and not practical with money resources on the other. In other words if the federal cabinet believes in town planning they could assist the municipalities considerably if aid under the Municipal Improvement Assistance Act were made available only for improvements to new areas.

That is the message I have to give to the minister from both these organizations; that he give careful consideration to assisting the municipalities to take care of their pensionable old age people and in the development of new areas. I am satisfied we could get some action if he would take up with the cabinet the reopening of this Municipal Improvements Assistance Act to make 2 per cent money available, because about two years ago the Minister of Finance intimated that he was not against the reopening of the act if the desire was there. I can assure you that the desire is there, and the reopening of the act would help develop the areas I referred to which are now handicapped because the municipalities cannot impose upon their inhabitants the heavy penalty of costly money for developing new areas.

Mr. H. A. Bryson (Humboldt-Melfort): I feel that I must not let this opportunity pass without once again saying something about housing for senior citizens, which comes under section 16 of the National Housing Act. I should like to refer to the comment made a short time ago by the hon. member for Vancouver South, when he suggested that some of the sections of the act were being modified and improved. Certainly this is one section of the act which, rather than being improved, is a step backward.

I feel that we in this country, as in possibly a good many other places, have failed to accept our responsibility toward our senior citizens. I am sure that the least we can do is say to them, "If you are prepared to pay rent for decent housing we shall provide the money with which to build the decent kind of housing you deserve". That is all the senior citizens are asking from us. They say, "You provide the housing and we will pay for it through rentals each month". Surely, we can at least accept our responsibilities to these people who have given so much, who have pioneered this country over the years.

[Mr. Jones.]

I pointed out recently, and I am not going to refer to what I said during the resolution stage, that under the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation we in Saskatchewan are going ahead at a very fast pace in erecting low-rental housing for our senior citizens. I was very much disappointed to learn that, because of the very small change in the act, the new provisions will not permit other provinces to follow the example of Saskatchewan. I think I am correct in saying that during the last year Saskatchewan has had 30 or so housing projects under way, and there are a great many other communities who want to go ahead with similar projects by forming limited dividend companies to provide housing for their senior citizens.

I am in favour of this type of housing for our senior citizens. I do not believe in taking our senior citizens away, as is done in some cases, and placing them in so-called institutions where they are cut off from friends and relatives and forced to live under circumstances which add nothing to their comfort or welfare. The type of project provided under section 16 is admirable in that respect.

When he spoke recently the minister agreed that Saskatchewan had done a very good job in this respect. The only difference is that Saskatchewan is able to provide adequate hostel accommodation for the remaining consorts. It is the degree of occupancy that means the difference between going ahead with these projects for self-contained units and not going ahead with them. I am sure there has been a great deal of interest shown throughout this country and the United States in what has been accomplished in my own province. As a matter of fact, the chairman of the subcommittee on housing of the committee on banking and commerce of the House of Representatives in the United States has been communicating with the department of social welfare in Saskatchewan asking for full details as to what we are attempting to do there in conjunction with loans from Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. They are showing a great deal of interest in that. It is unfortunate that other provinces in this country are not able to go ahead on the same basis. It is equally unfortunate that after June 31 of this year even the province of Saskatchewan will not be able to continue with this type of housing.

The other evening when I questioned the minister concerning this problem he said he was satisfied that the new act was going to be fair and would meet what he believed to be the particular conditions that existed. I should like, for a moment, to tell you something about this operation in my own province. It is all very well, Mr. Speaker, to say