

*Housing Prices*

megalopolis is coming to this area of Canada along the St. Lawrence system between Montreal stretching down to Windsor, into Detroit and going into the United States as far as Milwaukee. All the expert studies conducted by the Doxiadis group, one of the world's leading authorities in this field, have shown that that area's population is developing at a faster rate than any other area in North America. The population growth will be greater than the population growth in the existing megalopolis on the eastern seaboard between Boston and Baltimore. We all know the severe problems that have been created along this particular corridor, such as transportation, pollution, socio-economic problems, crime and so on, by this one continuous strip of humanity. That is bad enough, but it can not only happen here, it is going to happen here. Many Members of Parliament, particularly the younger members, are going to be seized of this problem and perhaps overwhelmed by it unless something is done about it now.

In any event, I suggest this illustrates that land costs in Toronto are under particular pressure since Toronto is at the heart of this megalopolitan development to which I have referred. It illustrates to me that several things are involved in land development and land costs. First of all, there is a need for an urgency in planning, certainly a much greater urgency than that shown at the present time. We need a planning that involves the cities and the metropolis of Toronto, the governments of Ontario and Quebec and every municipality in this particular corridor. Planning must also involve the new airport near Toronto, for example. Since three levels of government are desperately involved—and I use the word “desperately” advisedly—all the more reason for those governments to get together and tackle the problem of the St. Lawrence megalopolis. If this problem is not tackled now, then this generation which can see the problem coming will forever be reviled for having done very little about it. Therefore, it would be Conservative party policy to establish a national urban council of Canada representative of all levels of government to tackle this and the general problem of growing urbanization in Canada.

Another way to deal with land costs is to adopt the land bank proposal presented, and presented vigorously, by my leader. I suggest that in addition one consider the early provision of local services, sewage and water systems, for developments. The quicker these are tackled, particularly in high cost areas, the more the chance of keeping down costs. It is the land that lies dormant that attracts the high interest rates which are paid to the banks by the owner of the land, and we all know that the burden of these high interest rates ultimately falls upon the purchaser of the land. So there are at least three suggestions for dealing with some of the very aggravated problems that now exist, particularly in Toronto and in other parts of Canada.

Another point I should like to make flows out of a recent study presented by the Canadian Council on Social Development in Ottawa. This study has gone to every M.P.'s desk and I should like to deal with a point made at page 69 and with a recommendation that appears at page 74 which commend themselves to me. In talking of studies of housing requirements the report says:

On the whole, studies tend to be more concerned with housing demand (as a classical economic concept) than with determining

the dimensions of effective demand and unmet housing needs and spelling these out in terms of both subsidized and unsubsidized new construction and rehabilitation goals.

This is the recommendation to be found at page 74:

We consider the development of as accurate estimates as possible of future housing requirements to be a prerequisite for an intelligent and purposeful deployment of resources in the housing field. Without a better appreciation of the dimensions of future effective and non-effective demand for housing, public interventions in the housing market can be likened to building a dam across a river without taking the trouble to measure the water's depth. It is unlikely we will ever devise comprehensive policies capable of providing decent and reasonably priced housing for all Canadians as a right until we learn a great deal more about the extent of our present housing shortcomings and the likely effect of future social and economic trends.

I should now like to go to a point that I made on March 13 when housing was being considered by this House. As reported at page 783 of *Hansard* I had this to say on the subject of housing for people of low income, and I think it illustrates the problem we are facing:

In 1968, the lower income third of the population of this country took 6.5 per cent of the money available for housing, the middle income third took 49.4 per cent and the upper income third took 44.1 per cent. Two years later the figures in those three respective categories were 5.3 per cent, 54.2 per cent and 40.5 per cent.

If you want to show how rapidly the position of lower income Canadians has deteriorated in almost the last decade, note that in 1965 the lower income third share of the borrowings was 17.9 per cent, which shrunk to 5.4 per cent in 1970—an almost incredible statistic—

Yes, an almost incredible statistic that shows a deficiency in government planning but, even more than that, an almost incredible indictment of the so-called just society. As the columnist Dian Cohen wrote in the *Toronto Star*, in a paragraph headed “Pitifully inadequate”:

In the past 25 years, CMHC programs have produced about 250,000 housing units for the estimated 1,500,000 low income families in Canada. Simple arithmetic shows this number to be pitifully inadequate.

In the same article she went on to say:

The Charney report to the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation on low cost housing states that “the housing available at present for low income families is found for the most part in older existing stock. While only 41.3 per cent of the Canadian population lives in accommodations that were constructed prior to 1940, on the average 54.4 per cent of those with incomes less than \$5,000 occupy such dwellings—in the Atlantic provinces and in Ontario the figures are 61.4 per cent and 60.0 per cent respectively.

• (1240)

I think we should investigate ways to permit low and middle income families to borrow up to 100 per cent of their property costs. At one time this would be considered heresy, but we have helped in other directions; industry has been helped in many ways, and this would have been unbelievable to Members of Parliament 30 or 40 years ago. I suggest these low and middle income families should be subsidized by the government to help pay for their homes. If we did this through the medium of public housing, which has to be subsidized as far as rental payments are concerned, we could somehow extend the concept and give the man or woman of humble means the ability to own a piece of the action in Canada. I find nothing distasteful in that kind of an approach. By low income, I do not mean only families or five or six living on