

*Housing*

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** I am sorry to interrupt the Prime Minister, but his time has expired.

[English]

**Mr. Stanfield:** Mr. Speaker, may I request that the Prime Minister carry on? There is plenty of time for everyone and we would be glad to have the Prime Minister speak as long as he wishes.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Trudeau:** I thank hon. members for the permission they have given me to carry on. I will stop at any point you say, Mr. Speaker. I think I may need another five minutes to get to the end of the facts and figures which I wish to give to the house.

As hon. members will have appreciated, the task force report contained a number of recommendations, at least 16, which have a bearing on the responsibilities of the provinces or municipalities. Some of these recommendations were entirely outside the responsibilities of the federal government, but certain others affected the responsibilities of both the federal and provincial governments. It is this latter category which has had to be considered in working out a new federal policy.

There is the very important and basic question, for example, of whether the federal government should lend money for housing, for land banking or other purposes directly to the municipalities, or whether this should be done through the provincial governments. Because municipalities are within provincial jurisdiction, many provincial governments feel strongly that their priorities might be upset if the federal government dealt directly with the municipalities. Let me say for the record that this does not only apply to only one province. A high proportion of the provinces made such objections. I do not know whether the constitutional theories of the New Democratic party would give this kind of special status to only half the provinces and not to the others. It may be that that party is not prepared to grant special status to those provinces which never have had and will never elect a member of the New Democratic party, but this may be true of an increasing number of provinces.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Baldwin:** How about electing people who voted for the New Democratic party once?

[Mr. Trudeau.]

**Mr. Trudeau:** If, on the other hand, money is lent to provincial governments, is it not desirable and necessary to ensure that reasonable conditions are established for the use of that money, and that the ultimate beneficiary has some idea of the source of the money? And can these reasonable conditions be established without reasonable consultation?

On these and other related matters the government has already held important discussions with the provinces. Further discussions will be needed on other aspects of housing policy which affect substantially the priorities and objectives of provincial and municipal governments. We must do all we can to work together at all levels of government to achieve the basic goal which is and must be the provision of reasonable housing for every Canadian.

I have described the way in which we are dealing with a practical problem in a field where responsibility is shared among the different levels of government and which therefore requires close and continuing co-operation among them. This is our approach to federalism.

There is, I know, another point of view concerning Canadian federalism which is genuinely and sincerely felt by some Canadians. It goes something like this. There are times when problems which are largely within provincial jurisdiction, such as housing and urban development, become so serious and so widespread that they seem to be, or do indeed become, national problems. This may be because of neglect on the part of the provinces of their responsibilities, it may be because technological change has made something which once was local in character a truly nation-wide question, or it may be that something which is and ought to be within provincial jurisdiction can only be solved by joint federal-provincial action. Whatever the cause, this view of federalism runs, once a problem has become nation-wide in scope, once it has become a national problem, parliament ought to be able to act, to legislate, to spend, to lend, to start shared-cost programs, regardless of what the constitution says about provincial jurisdiction and regardless of the reaction of provincial governments. Why? Because parliament is the only body which represents the nation as a whole and is therefore the only body which can deal with problems on a national basis.

• (2:50 p.m.)

I can understand this point of view, although I do not share it I can understand it,