

Supply

housing. Prior to this debate I went into the library and dug out the home section of a Toronto daily issued last weekend. I wish to give you some idea of the type of prices that we are talking about in Metro Toronto, Mr. Speaker.

For a luxury town home at affordable prices, they only want the simple amount of \$167,900. That is for a townhouse. If one has the income, one can have a house on a ravine lot in Scarborough for \$277,990. If one does not like being too close to the City of Toronto, one can move out to Bramalea and buy a nice house there for a range of prices between \$239,900 and \$299,900. I am not talking about luxury homes, Mr. Speaker. If one does not like Bramalea, perhaps one can move to Brampton and buy a house for \$189,900. If that is not suitable, one can move into Bayview and buy a house for \$438,000. If these communities are not suitable, one can move around and go to a place called Leslie Valley. There one can buy a bargain house for \$199,990.

One can also go to Dixon Road on Highway 2 or Dundas Street, and find a house there for \$199,990. If one really wants a deal, one can move to Pickering and buy a house for \$154,990. These are not luxury homes by any means. When the Minister states that because of the increase in housing starts across the country there is no housing crisis, he is deluding himself, but he is certainly not deluding Canadians who have to live with the situation.

I have talked about houses in Metropolitan Toronto costing around \$200,000. In my own neck of the woods, and I am certainly not in an affluent neighbourhood of Toronto, houses cost anywhere around \$300,000. These are resale homes. The average wage in Metropolitan Toronto is approximately \$484 per week or \$25,464 a year.

It defies logic and common sense to say that housing that is being constructed today is affordable to the average income earner in a place like the City of Toronto. In fact, for most couples who want to buy a house in Toronto, both people have to work. They better not have any kids because they will not be able to carry the house let alone put a down payment on the house. It is totally unrealistic for the Minister to use the type of argument which he used to dismiss the intent of this motion.

I do not want us to return to the days around August 29, 1947, when the City of Toronto ran advertisements in newspapers across Canada which stated:

WARNING

ACUTE HOUSING SHORTAGE IN TORONTO, ONTARIO

Notification is hereby given to non-residents of this City that there is no available housing accommodation here. This Corporation will assume no responsibility or provide any assistance in locating living quarters for any person contemplating moving to Toronto.

For your own comfort and convenience

DO NOT COME TO TORONTO, ONTARIO
FOR HOUSING ACCOMMODATION

That was signed by the Mayor at that time, Robert Saunders, and the City Clerk at that time, J. W. Somers. That advertisement was run in newspapers on August 29, 1947.

The situation in Toronto is very similar today. My constituency office handles more calls from people asking for assistance to find affordable accommodation, whether it is a rooming house, an apartment, co-op housing units, or social housing run by the City of Metropolitan Toronto or the Ontario Government. I cannot help those people. There are no vacancies in Toronto. The vacancy rate in the City of Toronto is zero.

Approximately one month ago I received a letter from a woman who was a resident of Beaches for many years. Two years ago she moved to Cape Breton to look after her elderly mother. In that letter she stated that she was now ready to return to Toronto and wondered whether I could make any suggestions where she could apply for reasonable cost housing. I had to write back to that woman and seriously advise her that before she contemplated moving back to Toronto she attempt to find some housing, because there is absolutely none here.

In the City of Toronto a one bedroom apartment starts off at approximately \$1,200 a month. A basement apartment in a house, which is usually not even two rooms, costs approximately \$800 per month. One cannot find anything less. To make the argument that the Minister does that there is no crisis in housing defies belief, because there certainly is.

When I first was married I had every reasonable expectation that at some point I would be able to buy a house, and indeed I eventually did. Like most people, it was a struggle to begin with, but we managed. I do not know of too many young couples in Toronto who are starting off who can buy a home. In fact, it is becoming quite common when a young couple in Metropolitan Toronto get married that they move in with their parents and live in the parents' house rather than trying to find an apartment on their own, if they can afford the apartment to begin with. They certainly cannot afford a house when one looks at housing prices in the City of Toronto.

The Minister argued several minutes ago that an organization in Canada had conducted a study one winter night a year or so ago on the number of homeless in Canada that they could locate and found in total about 8,000 people who could be considered homeless in this country. I believe the Minister stated that the study was conducted on January 28, 1987. I have study after study where if one added up the numbers of homeless people who have been identified, not only in Toronto, but in Montreal, Vancouver, Winnipeg, the numbers way surpass 8,000 individuals who could be considered homeless in Canada.

● (1700)

The Toronto Star recently ran an excellent article, and I suggest that the Minister get his hands on it. It may educate him. The article said, and it is absolutely right, that no one knows exactly how many homeless there are in Canada. That kind of study has never been conducted. What has been done is a number of studies in a number of major urban centres. Here