

I am sure the housing authorities, city, provincial and federal would all agree that if they had an opportunity to begin again they would not have planned the Regent Park development in its present form but would have dispersed a larger number of smaller public housing developments throughout the residential downtown districts. But they cannot have second thoughts in this regard. A heavy investment has been made. Therefore the question remaining is how to provide the best possible environment for these residents.

At the time Regent Park North and South were constructed only limited facilities were provided for recreation. This was in accord with the statutes existing at the time which provided only limited authority to C.M.H.C., although in both cases C.M.H.C. had contributed to the cost. As the house knows, by the 1964 amendments substantial increases were made in the sums available for public housing, particularly toward capital cost. My proposal this evening is that the same amounts should be made available to provide better recreational facilities and more particularly a community centre to serve not only the projected Trefann Court development but the Regent Park South and North developments as well.

In parenthesis I might add that my hon. friend from Spadina (Mr. Ryan) has also been active in proposing this kind of development through the medium of St. Christopher House in Alexandra Park. I do not minimize the city's financial difficulties when it comes to providing this accommodation. Toronto has a tightly stretched budget and its income cannot be extended on the present limited tax base. It is for this reason that the senior levels of government have come forward to provide assistance in respect of public housing and, in the case of the recent amendments to the statutes, to provide the lion's share of assistance through Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. I am asking that this assistance be extended to a community centre in the new area of Trefann Court, assistance which will also be of benefit to Regent Park.

The minister in his efforts to promote public housing has earned the consideration mentioned in two lines from a poem by John Masefield—

And he who gives a child a home
Builds palaces in Kingdom come.

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The minister and C.M.H.C. have sought to do that. I would urge them to try to earn the reward mentioned in the preceding couplet.

And he who gives a child a treat
Makes joy-bells ring in Heaven's street.

The treat in this case is to provide for those who have not had good luck, the opportunity for good recreation in a community centre, to provide for those at a disadvantage the advantage of better neighbourhood facilities. I hope this particular appeal can find some response from the corporation.

Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, the question that was asked yesterday was:

Has C.M.H.C. recommended to the city of Toronto that the plan for the Trefann Court housing development in downtown Toronto include community center facilities for the Regent Park and Trefann Court developments?

I might say that yesterday C.M.H.C. received their first communication on this subject. It was a letter from the city of Toronto enclosing what they referred to as a report, report No. 13, from the board of control, relating to the Trefann Court development. The purpose of this letter was to advise the corporation that it was the intention of the city of Toronto to apply to the federal and provincial governments for financial assistance in the implementing of an urban renewal scheme in downtown Toronto, that is, in the Trefann Court development area.

I might say that, subject to the approval of the province of Ontario, because the initiative here rests with the municipality and the province concerned, C.M.H.C. is prepared to consider and make recommendations to me, as the minister concerned, respecting the extent of financial contribution under the act to worth-while projects. According to my information this particular project involves, not the amount mentioned by the hon. member for Rosedale (Mr. Macdonald), but a sum slightly in excess of \$5 million. But that is not the point. Nowhere in the communication received from the city of Toronto is there any reference to a community centre.

I might say that this is probably accounted for by the fact, as mentioned by the hon. member, that until the 1964 amendments to the act it was not possible to provide recreational facilities of the kind suggested by the hon. member. That probably accounts for the omission in this proposal put forward by the city.