

● (1640)

[English]

As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, we are stuck in too many areas of the country—and my area is certainly no exception—with a situation where automobile owners may feel justified in paying the ten cents excise tax on gasoline as a fee for their pleasure driving. But with good reason they are not going to be happy about this ten cents per gallon fee for driving for which there is no alternative as a means to travel to and from work. This is true everywhere in Canada and it relates to a number of mistakes which have occurred in the way our cities have been planned since World War II.

In my view, we have made a number of serious errors in the use of our powers through the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation as a lender. We had and still have the opportunity to use this lending power to force municipalities to do things in a sensible way. I would argue, and the facts support me in nearly every city, that we have not done things properly. Our suburbs could have been much better planned aesthetically, architecturally, and in relation to traffic and access to schools and from the point of view of green space, parkland and recreational facilities.

Model cities in the United States and Europe demonstrate what is possible. The technology was there long ago, and indeed Williamsburg, Virginia, which was built 200 years ago is much better planned than most of our subdivisions.

We have sacrificed time and time again at the municipal level for things which were not in the public interest. We have sacrificed good design and planning to various selfish interests and conflicts of interest in almost every municipal jurisdiction in Canada. The result is shown in many of the problems that are surfacing now such as outlandish taxes in some suburban areas. With the rise in energy costs we are finding that we have built suburbs that are totally dependent on the automobile, with no provision for foot paths, bicycle paths or easy access to any form of public transit. We are facing the mistakes of many years of negligence and poor planning, and yet through CMHC the federal government had power to do things differently.

I am always amazed at the kind of criticism of housing that comes from the opposition, Mr. Speaker. They harp on the amount of housing and do not have much to say about quality, planning, or long term approaches.

Presumably the injection of \$200 million into housing as announced in the budget means that local CMHC offices will be told to spend the money in two, three or four weeks, and hundreds of builders will be lined up with plans that make varying degrees of sense. A lot of them will be accepted. Such housing may be more or less adequate from the construction point of view, but the minister must be prepared to take sterner measures and insist upon the proper location of such housing close to existing schools, public transit, recreational facilities and so on. Unless he is prepared to tie all those things together when he lends the money to build more of these low cost homes with this \$200 million, we will end up with more developments on the fringes of existing suburbs where they are

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serviced inadequately and where their existence serves to increase taxes for everyone in the municipality concerned.

We have gone through all this before. When will the government wake up and use the power it has? I do not entirely blame Central Mortgage and Housing because the federal government has always been reluctant, claiming that it is within provincial jurisdiction and constitutionally we should not interfere.

We have seen the results of planning being left in the hands of the provinces. We should not lend another cent unless we attach more stringent conditions. Even if new construction were slowed down for a few months, it would be worth while because in the long run everyone would be better off.

As an example of the kind of thing which we have power to do something about I would mention new cities. There is the proposed southeast city here and the one at Pickering. Regional government is opposed to a model city which would have the effect of bringing down prices for new house buyers in the Ottawa area by at least \$10,000. We have continued resistance by regional government which favours real estate speculators who happen to have bought land in the other direction. The phony arguments that have been advanced in this House as well as publicly by regional government and the provincial government of Ontario to the effect that this land is incapable of supporting housing are nonsense. The recent report has shown clearly that the land can support housing. As a matter of fact, this so-called high water table which was the focus of criticism will be an asset when artificial lakes are created and form part of the green areas and contribute to the aesthetics of what will be a fine model city.

I hope that the government in its wisdom with this budget is not including any cutbacks in money that might be allocated for southeast city. It is the same kind of nonsense in my view as not acting on urban transit right now. It is irrational for the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Chrétien) to refuse to allocate funds, or to go slow on the allocation of funds for southeast city when one of the main pressures on salaries in the Ottawa area, and government in general, has been house prices. These prices have in effect fired the fuel of inflation in Canada. Government salaries have been pushed up because of house prices, and this has been reflected by the example set elsewhere in the economy.

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Why are we not doing anything about something that could reduce house prices by a very major percentage? To cut back on model cities or land assembly programs is a nonsensical approach toward saving which I find impossible to support. I intend to continue to criticize. I hope there is no such holdback. I hope the government will do everything possible to encourage more land assembly projects across Canada.

It is a provincial tragedy, and almost a national tragedy, that although Canada has had a land assembly act on the books since 1953 or 1954 through which Ontario could have acquired land all around Toronto to permit housing to be developed at a fraction of what it now costs to acquire a lot, that the powers that be in Ontario never, up until the last year or so, when it was obvious the horse had left the