

Routine Proceedings

A week ago last Friday in Vancouver, I announced the start of an in-depth and comprehensive consultation in which the residents and neighbours will be fully involved. We will endeavour to show that it is possible to plan redevelopment in a manner which is consistent with local views and which is truly sensitive to the needs of those affected.

A week ago yesterday in Toronto, I announced the details of our plans to redevelop the lands where the CMHC Toronto branch office has been located since the 1950s so as to create an additional 150 dwellings.

In Toronto and in Vancouver we are demonstrating that it is possible to make better use of our resources. In both cases the land was originally developed many years ago at very low densities and the surrounding areas now feature higher densities. It is our expectation that these initiatives will be completely self-financing and could in fact result in some return on the government's investment.

In Vancouver, we are showing how redevelopment can occur in complete sympathy with the neighbourhood, and in Toronto we will be showing the potential for public-private partnerships as we call for proposals from industry to participate with us in the redevelopment of the lands.

[*Translation*]

In Canada, we continue to be seriously concerned about the problem of affordable housing, especially in such demand driven markets as Toronto and Vancouver. Alone, the Federal Government lacks the land resources necessary to deal with the problem. However, we are looking quite closely at all the possibilities open to us to utilize our land resources to the maximum.

[*English*]

Recognizing that we need a concentrated effort to deal with the situation in demand driven markets, I have called upon representatives of the provincial and municipal governments to join with us in local committees to co-ordinate our efforts in addressing the concerns of affordable housing. These committees are already working on this challenge in many of the urban areas of our country, including Toronto and Vancouver.

As well, the federal government is sponsoring a four-year program aimed at improving housing affordability and choice. That is called ACT, for Affordability and Choice Today. This program, jointly managed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canadian Home Builders and the Canadian Housing and Renewal Associations, will provide funding to eliminate barriers to new solutions to housing needs and to reduce the costly delays in obtaining development approvals.

Because we cannot resolve housing affordability concerns alone, we have acted to build co-operation with other levels of government and private industry. We need to tear down the road blocks to the solutions and set the right examples. I believe that our recent undertakings, particularly in Vancouver and Toronto, are important steps in this direction.

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Madam Speaker, it is an indication of just how little the government has done in the field of affordable housing that the announcement that the minister has just made constitutes a major initiative for the government.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, this is an indication of the poor performance of this government in the region of housing which it just announced as a major initiative.

[*English*]

I would applaud the government for its announcement that it is now prepared to co-operate with municipalities and the private sector in order to develop some kind of an effort in the field of affordable housing.

Unfortunately all we have heard from the government since this minister was appointed, and indeed since the government took power, has been rhetoric and very little action. Despite the promises and grand statements, as the minister repeated for the umpteenth time his initiative in the case of Downsview and Vaughan, there is no construction and there is no initiative. How many more times is the minister going to make the same announcement without some action on his part?

There are thousands of people in Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, and right across the country who are demanding social housing, co-operative housing, and subsidized