

Interim Supply

I might say that in southeastern British Columbia the company refuses to have anything to do with the national employment service. They hire at the shed door every morning. They like to line up the workers for jobs, and they go down the line and say, "You, you and you", and so on. If they had co-operated with the national employment service it might have been of some assistance on keeping a check on who was employed and who was not.

I rose to bring this to the attention of the ministers concerned. I also thank the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration for writing me fully, as he did. I am quite sure, as the hon. member for Nanaimo said, he wrote according to the information he had in hand.

Mr. Barnett: Mr. Chairman, in an exchange during the question period the Minister of Public Works attempted to point with some pride to the new low-cost housing money which is being made available. However, I should like to suggest that the effectiveness or otherwise of the proposal to which some publicity was given in the papers not so long ago, depends on how is it working out in individual cases. I hold in my hand a report which I have received as an example of just how the so-called low-cost housing proposal, as it has existed up to now, is working out in many instances. I feel that it might be valuable, while we are considering this interim supply motion, to pass on this information to the minister and to the committee.

This report comes from a couple who are interested in the proposals as they read them in the newspapers. They report that they have been busy investigating, as they hoped it would be of help to them and many people in their category to get a start on owning their own home instead of paying out high rent which has no ceiling, as they say, in British Columbia. This is their report of their actual experience and what happened. They said:

First, my husband went to a bank for information which was not available from the manager as he said he knew no more than what was in the papers.

Then the wife went one day to the manager with some other questions and was informed that they would have to see the Central Mortgage and Housing office in Nanaimo, which is the nearest office to them. Her husband took a day off from work and they went to Nanaimo to find out about it. This resulted in the fact that they found the manager and his assistant both away from the office. There may have been a legitimate reason for that. They were able to get some little information from the stenographers in the office on the rules and regulations. The

[Mr. Herridge.]

next day they telephoned the manager in charge and were told that they would have to go and see the bank. They went to the bank and by that time the manager apparently was able to tell them what they could do and what they could not do and, as they comment, it was mostly what they could not do. This woman goes on to explain that her husband has a good job at a wage of approximately \$2.00 an hour but they could not qualify because the wages would not come within the specifications required. I think this is important if one is going to think in terms of low-cost housing, because certainly to many of the citizens in many parts of Canada \$2.00 an hour is not considered to be a low wage.

Following that, they went to see a contractor. He told them that a house with a thousand square feet of floor space and two bedrooms would cost between \$13,000 and \$14,000 and possibly more, if they had to follow the specifications laid down by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. They go on to say that they cannot see how that kind of price can apply to people in their income category. They go on to explain that apparently they would need at least \$4,000 to put into the project before the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation provision could come into effect. As they explain, if they had \$4,000 they would not need to go to Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation because they could easily use that \$4,000 as a down payment on an older type of house and pay off the remainder on the basis of monthly rental payments.

They go on to say that they want something they can handle, that they need to have a two-bedroom house because the father of one of the couples who is an old age pensioner lives with them. They are anxious to get away from the never-ending payment of high rent which is, as we all realize, money down the drain as far as the position of these people is concerned.

I put this little story before the committee because it is an actual instance of the need and desire of a couple receiving what I imagine the minister would agree is not a low wage to be able to take advantage of the so-called new low-cost housing money that he mentioned was being made available when he answered a question the other day. I submit that if the experience this couple has had in attempting to secure information and in finding how far the proposal actually goes when it is translated into an individual request is an example of what the proposal means, then certainly we should be looking for something much better before the minister has any right to suggest that he has