

National Housing Act

areas where ordinary subdivisions have not been developed.

At this point I might be permitted to make an aside—I do not know whether or not it could be classed as a question of privilege. I know it is customary, on occasion, for hon. members to quote from newspapers. In the *Globe and Mail* this morning I saw an editorial which started off very nicely with the words “Hi, there . . .”. Then, it went on to berate two members of this House—for which, more power to it. But, at the end the article states:

Still, this reduction of minority government parliament to its lowest common denominator—

I understand this is a very insulting way in which to say “denominator”—

—is curiously casual in a House to which the halt and lame and seedy have lately hauled their feverish bodies.

I can defend myself very well, and so can a good many members of this House. But when it comes to words such as these, I think of two outstanding members. One of them is the Minister of Veterans Affairs, who despite a handicap is an outstanding member of the House and an outstanding servant of this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Darling: Another is the hon. member for St. Catharines (Mr. Morgan), again an outstanding member, despite the fact that he is almost blind.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Darling: These hon. members are certainly to be commended much more highly than those of us who enjoy reasonably good health. I think some smart-Aleck reporter for the *Globe and Mail* should be taken to task. He may have a strong back but it is my impression he has a very weak mind. A good many of these people seem to think they have the answers to all questions—that the hon. members on the government front bench, and on the front benches of the opposition parties, know nothing compared to these smart-Aleck reporters who have answers to everything. I am very well aware of the saying “If you can’t take the heat get out of the kitchen”. I am here and I like the heat. There is no signature beneath this article—it was probably written by some cub reporter. But when accusations of this kind are made, I think it is time someone in this House spoke in defence of the members concerned and took these writers to task.

There is one other area with which I should like to deal. It brings up the whole question of subdivision control and the long delays which occur in approving land for building. I listened to one farmer, now retired, telling me in very strong terms, to put it mildly—I could not repeat in this chamber the language he used—that the government had kicked him off his farm. He wanted to take an acre of land off his farm and build a small modern house on it. He would then turn the farm over to his son to operate—his plan was to help his son and, probably, to keep a few chickens himself. Well, he was unable to get permission to build the house and, as a result he sold the farm to someone from the city who paid, I suppose, a reasonable price for it. The point is, though, that the farm is now out

[Mr. Darling.]

of production and the barns are falling into decay. This, to me, represents a step backwards.

I am well aware of the powers available to provincial planning boards to determine where buildings can be placed. But in this case the farm was located close to a highway on a year-round road. No additional services were required, and the school bus already passes the lot the farmer had chosen. All that has happened is this: the township in question has lost the additional taxes which would have been paid, and the farmer has moved into town, where he was obliged to pay almost the total price of his farm for a house—a house in which he is not nearly as happy, and probably not as healthy either.

I know of a great many other cases, such as the one I have just mentioned, involving farmers who wished to retain one building lot on their farms upon which to build a home for their retirement. This story has been repeated many times across the province of Ontario. Homes could have been built on these lots without any worry whatever about additional services. No new sewers or water systems would have been needed because the lots chosen were, naturally, by the side of existing roads. I do not think these farmers intended to raise second families but in any event the school buses were going by their doors.

I believe it has been established that the federal government’s explicit role in the housing field is to ensure that all Canadians are adequately housed in viable communities at prices they can afford. That is certainly an ambitious undertaking. It means that at the federal level, at least, and only partly through cost-sharing there has to be a concentration of effort on housing needs of low income families. It means a wider search for new and cheaper building techniques. It means assistance to the less well-off among us to enable them to rehabilitate their homes and their communities. Among other things, it moves Ottawa into a field of direct income subsidies in connection with housing, where required, as a new wrinkle in its income support programs.

As an example of the savings which can be brought about through alternative building techniques, about \$2,000 could be saved on smaller homes if basements were dispensed with and the homes were simply built on solid concrete slabs. Then again, the building code presently demands that all lumber used in house construction must be stamped. This discriminates against many of our small sawmills which are unable to provide stamped lumber. Yet their lumber is graded—it is just as good as the stamped materials and, sometimes, it is better. Relaxation of this rule should lead to a saving amounting to a minimum of \$200 a house—the exact amount would depend, of course, on the quantity used. That damned stamp costs an additional \$20 per thousand. For many applications, second grade plywood could be used, sometimes available at half price. Again, of course, the total saving would depend on the quantity used. I would point out that in many of the homes built in our smaller centres plywood is used a great deal for finishing rather than gyproc or plaster.

I am pleading for a place in the sun for the rural areas of Canada. These are the areas in which attempts should be made to build more houses and develop more industry. I firmly believe that, given a reasonable opportunity to