

just another promise at this time? The minister responsible has stated that this organization will have an operational budget of \$75 million. This is both ironic and a pity when one considers its budget was cut when it was not even operative. Its budget was cut, of course, in the June 23 budget.

I would be neglecting my duty if in the last few minutes allotted to me I did not make reference to the native and rural housing program. The House will recall that the last two times I spoke on this subject—in February and last year in the fall—I questioned the minister as to the progress of the program which, in his words, was to acquire or build 50,000 housing units for native people or people living in rural areas over a period of five years, and the same number of housing units were to be rehabilitated. In other words, there was to be an increase in housing inventory in rural areas available to the native citizens amounting to 100,000 homes.

This program was announced some time early in 1974. I asked the minister in November how it was going, and he admitted that 24 of the 50,000 homes had been started. I suppose one has to start somewhere. But in February, when I spoke on this subject, I made inquiries of the information service of CMHC and was told by one of the officials there that such a policy called the native and rural housing policy did not exist. That prompted me to make reference to it in the House of Commons. I have a letter here which the previous minister wrote me on the subject. One paragraph reads as follows:

We have just given a grant of \$219,000 to the BCANSI—That is the British Columbia Association of Non-Status Indians. The letter continues:

—to assist them in developing a housing delivery system. Their proposal includes the construction of 3,500 new houses, the upgrading of 1,750 existing houses and the purchase of 1,750 houses for resale or rental to native people over a period of seven years.

This letter is dated April 30, 1974. The paragraph continues:

For the current year they have set as a goal the construction of 200 new units and the acquisition of another 200 existing units. They also hope to undertake an extensive rehabilitation and renovation program.

There was to be a sum of \$219,000, mentioned by the minister, to set up a delivery system for that program in the province of British Columbia. I followed its progress a little bit and it appeared to me it was not just \$219,000 that has been spent to set up this delivery system, but in addition there were grants from the Secretary of State to this most illustrious group to do all kinds of other things as well, all of which resulted in the fact that there was not a single house built in the province of British Columbia for that group.

I should be fair and say that 24 units, which the minister made reference to in November of this year, were actually built in British Columbia, and I suppose one might assume that the BCANSI group should take credit for that breakthrough. I discussed the matter with the minister and expressed his concern about this obvious waste of money. I built during the first year, but nowhere in the province did it appear to me that there was any aggressive attempt to get the program moving.

As a result of my intervention, this function was eventually taken away from that group and in British Columbia at this time we at least have something that is functional. Under the program there has been set up a delivery system which this year delivered or started close to 400 new homes. I must give credit where credit is due. The province has become involved. Native people are not sitting on the present board, but we have two or three very aggressive regional managers of CMHC who have recognized the need, are supporting this group and are actually out selling the program.

Incidentally, this program is not very popular in Ottawa as yet. At a meeting last night of the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development, I asked the minister and his deputy how the program was working in conjunction with their activities. They were not entirely sure of the program and they did not realize it could be implemented on reservations. In any event, we got that matter straightened out and maybe some of my colleagues and people in the field will eventually look at it a little closer, recognizing the potential of the program if implemented on a broader scale throughout this country and it frightens me when I look throughout this country and recognize that only in British Columbia is this program working at this time. I cannot, of course, criticize the minister or the government for not bringing in this kind of legislation. I do criticize them—I cannot put it in any other terms—for what appears to be deliberately keeping information from people who could be affected by this program, because the program is important.

● (1630)

While I have handed out some bouquets to some of the people who make the decisions in British Columbia, I should like for a moment to mention a little experiment I carried out in my constituency. I was asked by a person in a rural area adjacent to mine to give him a hand with the construction of his house. Since it is on the road I frequently travel, I decided to make the situation an experiment.

I spent some time with his family. There are ten children. It is a family of status Indians living off the reserve on a piece of land leased from the province. They have no budgeting problems. This is a very respectable family in the area. It occurred to me that this might be an interesting exercise. I told my constituent, of course, that I have 140,000 people in the constituency and that he would have to play along with me in carrying out this exercise. I took the time to visit various offices with him, particularly the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation office in Prince George. I told the officer there, with whom I have a very good relationship, that I intended to test the system with this friend of mine who lives in the Hart highway area of British Columbia.

I told the official I intended to see that this family got a house. Of course, I was offered all possible assistance from this office of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. As soon as I returned to Ottawa I received a telephone call from my friend. I had told him that every time something went wrong or the monkey started throwing coconuts, I wanted to know about it. He told me that an official of