

National Housing Act

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the ultimate objective of the housing program has been set forth quite adequately in a book which I referred to the other day and which is entitled "Houses for Canadians" by Humphrey Carver. I understand that to this book which resulted from studies made in the field of housing, contributions were made by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, a department of the Ontario government, and the city of Toronto.

Mr. Winters: I gather the hon. member knows that Mr. Carver is an employee of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation?

Mr. Ellis: Yes, I am quite aware of that fact. At page 123 in the chapter on "The Ultimate Housing Problem" we find this statement:

The ultimate objective of the national housing program should be the provision of a decent dwelling for every Canadian family.

Mr. Speaker, that is what we have been saying throughout. I made that statement in the debate on the amendments to the National Housing Act in 1954. The statement was made the other day at the resolution stage. The minister seems to feel that we are being unrealistic, that we are asking for too much. We are asking for the type of policy which the minister's own advisers suggest as the ultimate objective. To continue with this statement:

From this it follows that the crucial and ultimate test of the effectiveness of housing policy is the condition of the worst housed families in our communities.

I would pause at this moment to suggest to the minister that if he wants to apprise himself of the housing situation in Canada he should not be looking just at statistics of new housing starts, housing which ranges anywhere from \$11,000 to perhaps \$30,000 or \$50,000 or even higher, but that he should take the advice of his advisers and judge the situation in Canada from the standpoint of the most poorly housed in this country. If he did that, I am quite sure there would not be on the part of the government the same smugness that is revealed at the present time. This statement continues:

The task will not be completed until obsolete housing has been removed and every Canadian family has been given the opportunity to enjoy healthy and satisfying living conditions. It is a task which undoubtedly requires all the technical ingenuity and administrative skill which the Canadian people possess.

Of course the weakness in so far as government policy is concerned is this. Perhaps the Canadian people have the technical ingenuity and administrative skill, but unfortunately they have not the type of government which

can channel that skill into the type of housing program that will satisfy the need.

As I suggested earlier, Mr. Speaker, the amendments in the proposed bill, as far as they go, are certainly worthy of support. But once again I say that if the government feel that this nibbling away at the problem or going as fast as they feel they will have to go in response to pressure is the answer to the housing problem, I think they are extremely shortsighted. I should like the minister to inform members of the house as to what is the ultimate policy of the government. The minister has told us that he does not believe that the provision of housing for every Canadian is a practical thing, or certainly is not government policy.

Mr. Winters: No, I did not say that.

Mr. Ellis: I should like the minister to give us an idea as to whether the government agrees with the ultimate objective as outlined in this book?

Mr. Winters: Why don't you read what I said in reply to you when the resolution was before the house?

Mr. Ellis: I have the reply at hand.

Mr. Winters: Read it.

Mr. Ellis: As recorded at page 3201 of *Hansard* we find this:

Mr. Winters: I never did say that the government's policy was to provide a new house at once for every Canadian citizen.

Mr. Winters: Read the next statement.

Mr. Ellis: He continues:

The Liberal government's policy is to provide adequate housing for everybody, and we are travelling just as rapidly as we can in that direction.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Ellis: We have had many indications of Liberal speed. If one were to make the statement that the Liberal government is travelling with equal speed in the provision of a national health plan, I suppose some hon. members opposite would applaud.

Mr. Winters: Tell me any other country in the world that is doing better.

An hon. Member: Half a dozen.

Mr. Ellis: Mr. Speaker, one could go into this matter quite fully and point to countries like Great Britain, which lost homes through bombing during the war years, and the policy there. They had a much more serious problem than that which we face in Canada. Our problem in Canada, apart from indecision and unwillingness by the government to do anything in former years, has been complicated only by a comparatively slight increase