

National Housing Act

part of the way down the garden path with the spirit of the amendment, but we cannot support it.

I have an amendment to the amendment which I propose to move, seconded by the hon. member for Lincoln (Mr. Lockhart). I move:

That all the words of the amendment after the word "that" be struck out and the following substituted therefor:

"That the government should forthwith enlist the active co-operation of the provincial and municipal governments for the setting up in municipalities which have need of them of local housing authorities to provide low-rent housing for veterans who cannot afford present economic rentals, and for the purpose of clearing slums and re-housing families living in slum accommodation."

The fact of the matter is that almost all governments of Canada are seized with the necessity for immediate housing and for co-operation in respect thereto. In Ontario at the present time an election campaign is in progress, and I have been pleased to see that Mr. Robinette, one of the leaders, a gentleman who might easily have been leader of the Liberal party in Ontario, has taken time out to speak respecting the subject of housing. This is what he had to say:

Mr. Farquhar Oliver would soon announce a new Liberal housing plan for Ontario if elected. It will call for the provincial government to assume the municipal taxes on new houses for a period of four years, if they are built by individuals on their own property.

This is an innocuous sort of platform for a party to have. However, I am not criticizing it. I am simply saying the thought is there in the mind of a Liberal leader in the Ontario election. He says the Liberal party has some ideas in connection with providing housing.

Then, we have the bill brought down by the Premier of Ontario, one of the sections of which reads something like this:

We shall participate with municipalities that wish to take advantage of the federal low-rental housing plan. Under these proposals the federal government offers to build houses for rent on land supplied and serviced by the municipality. The cost of the land and services to the municipality is not to exceed \$600 per house. The municipality also receives a payment in lieu of taxes which is frequently less than would be paid if the house were assessed and taxed in the usual way. Many municipalities have indicated that they wish to take advantage of this plan. In several places, the financial burden placed upon the municipality has been a deterrent. In order to reduce this burden we shall offer to pay one-half of the cost of land and services to the limit of \$300 per house and to the present limit of 10,000 houses. Thus we are renewing in principle the offer made to the federal government in 1944 when we offered to

[Mr. Timmins.]

contribute one-half of the equity in low rental housing. The cost of this might thus amount to \$3,000,000.

There is another evidence of the willingness of a government to co-operate with a federal administration in respect of low-rental housing. What is said in the brief extract I have just read was exemplified the other day in the township of North York where a group of young businessmen, who know their way around in respect of housing, went before the council of that township and said, "We have a plan. We know where we can get land, and we are prepared to build a large group of houses right away". The township of North York said that they did not want them in the municipality, that in a sense they were a menace because they would cost the township too much money through having to provide school facilities and sewage services. They told them that the township had no sewage disposal plant and that they would have to rely upon the city of Toronto. They told them that they had better go back to the city of Toronto and get it to take on their proposition.

That is the sort of run-around which has been going on for some considerable time. My thought and the thought of this party in moving the amendment to the amendment this afternoon is to suggest something immediate, something practical that can be brought into force in the not too distant future. The fact of the matter is that, while the municipalities are anxious to get houses, they cannot afford them. They have to pass the problem on to the province and in turn the province must solicit the leadership and help of the federal government. To my mind it is a simple problem, a problem which could be solved quite easily with some leadership from the minister and his department.

The minister has said all this himself. He said it in his address the other day. We are back to the position where we are asking that the whole matter should be brought to a head in the immediate future, that a conference should be called and that these matters which are pressing upon the municipalities should be dealt with in a practical way. As I mentioned the other day, some seventy-nine municipalities in Canada had negotiated contracts with the Department of Reconstruction and Supply with respect to 12,000 veterans houses; but, as far as the completion of negotiations and the doing of the work is concerned, only some 8,000 houses have emerged. In other words, the municipalities found themselves in the position where they could not carry through.

This simply typifies the situation throughout Canada. The parties must get together and arrange a low-rental housing plan. We in this