

National Housing Act

section 36 of the act. It does not seem to me that section 36 is the best section under which to proceed with housing for old people, and that if everybody inside and outside the house really put their shoulders to the wheel and got interested service clubs, churches, branches of the Legion and so on to take the initiative under the limited dividend section we would have a lot of old people's housing that we have not now.

As I see it, under that act they cannot possibly lose. For the whole lifetime of the entire project their loans are under the government guarantee. In other words I think there is no conflict between the views held by the minister and the views held by the Vancouver housing association. They both favour these small units scattered over the whole neighbourhood, and not great big islands of old people's housing.

Mr. Brooks: Mr. Chairman, I just want to say a few words in support of what was said by the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra. As a matter of fact I think we are many years behind other countries in this question of looking after the housing for our old people. I have brought the matter up previously in connection with veterans across Canada. I think some effort should be made not only to provide homes for our old veterans but to provide homes for the old people in general. I know the sentiment or feeling among many people across Canada today is that our old people are not being fairly treated.

Today we have perhaps many more old people in isolation than formerly on account of our social legislation. They are put in what are called nursing homes; they are isolated; they are off by themselves; they have no community life of any kind. I believe this is one of the important problems confronting us here in Canada. It is not only a local problem in Vancouver; it is a problem all across Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

In the city of Saint John a short time ago a decision was made, I believe, to establish homes for old people. When I was overseas many years ago I recall that in certain sections of England homes for old people had been established. They were a sort of community homes. If an old man and his wife were living together a home was provided for those old people. There was a place for them to go. There was a place also for old bachelors and others. There was a definite community, and over this community there was certain supervision. For instance, there was a nursing organization that looked after the health of the old people. There was a recreation centre where the old people could have recreation.

[Mr. Philpott.]

I believe there is a great need for that sort of thing in Canada today. I think the minister's department could very well take this matter under consideration. In centres all across this country some provision should be made so the life of the older people of this country would be made happier and more contented instead of, as I say, putting them away in a nursing home, in a room away back in the country or in some city, somewhere by themselves where they are unhappy and where they are obliged to live out their last days in loneliness and almost in privation as far as social life is concerned.

I think this is a great question. As I said before, I have raised it in connection with veterans' housing. It also applies to other old people. I am in hearty accord with what the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra has brought out this afternoon. We are behind other nations. We are behind Sweden, Great Britain and most European countries as far as this problem is concerned.

Mr. Henderson: I should like to say a few words on this bill and on the topic under consideration which has been discussed by those who have spoken previously. I might say that I am pleased that in the city of Kingston we have a group of public-spirited citizens of all races, religions, creeds and politics who have joined together to take advantage of the limited dividend provision of our legislation in order to provide good low-rental housing for senior citizens. At the same time, I think most of our senior citizens like to enjoy that feeling of independence which comes from feeling that they are paying for what they are getting.

With respect to this Bill No. 215, I might say that I am pleased to see that the limitation is removed from part III whereby that part would apply only to low or moderate cost rental housing or for municipal, provincial or federal public purposes. I am glad to see that part III can now be made use of, upon the approval of this bill, so that blighted substandard areas may be put to the best use.

That is most important in older cities like Kingston, for instance, which I represent. In many of these old cities, though they have many historical parts, possibly the early planning has been interfered with by the growth of our country. Many municipalities are looking for an equalized assessment whereby certain areas may be used for either commercial or industrial use in order to increase the assessment where other assessments for an increased number of homes at the beginning cost the city a great deal more money than the tax return. The removal of this limitation certainly will assist the municipalities looking for these features in