

many other people, that the government does not have all the answers to the present housing crisis. What with the millions of dollars hon. gentlemen on the treasury benches opposite have squandered on housing surveys, urban planning studies and urban demonstration programs since 1969, one would think they must have the answer to any question or problem which could possibly arise on these subjects in the next 20 years. But this is obviously not the case. The government has come up with very few answers which have contributed significantly to easing Canada's housing crisis.

Whenever I think of the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Danson) the image conjured up is that of the fellow in the stands at a professional hockey game. I mean the fellow who walks around shouting "Programs, programs". He usually has little trouble selling his products since nothing else is available, but because the players and the game are changing so fast the program is invariably out of date and inaccurate by the time it is sold. The program seller, being a well meaning sort, immediately has another program drawn up for the next home game. Unfortunately, with player trades, expansions and teams gone out of business, the new program is again out of date. This persists until the man with all the programs finally realizes that he needs one which lists all the players and all the teams, a comprehensive program, as it were.

The Minister of State for Urban Affairs has not realized this yet. He continues to produce stop-gap, after-the-fact programs which he hopes will hold the attention of spectators for long enough to give him a chance of coming up with a newer one. Admittedly, he is getting better at it. But he does not seem to realize how important, how vital this game is. Bill C-46 is still not sufficient to make reasonable priced housing available to a reasonable number of Canadians.

The housing situation in Canada today now constitutes, as my hon. friend from Kingston and the Islands so accurately put it on January 27, a crisis of major proportions. I hope that all realistic members of the House—and I use a description which the Minister of Urban Affairs repeatedly applies to himself—realize the magnitude and the gravity of the situation. I do not need to quote statistics showing an apartment vacancy rate of under 2 per cent—as low as .1 per cent in some cities—or refer to the fact that fewer than 5 per cent of Canadians can afford to buy a home in urban centres.

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The situation is extremely serious and I think the minister must surely realize this. I doubt if Bill C-46 will alleviate many of the major problems. The deficiencies of Bill C-46 have been well articulated in preceding speeches, and I should like to make my remarks in a more positive vein. This minister seems to me to have a very genuine concern for the challenges facing him, and for that reason I am sure he welcomes any and all suggestions that are meant to help him ease the housing crisis.

The first suggestion I would have for the minister is to make every effort to trim the red tape involved in erecting a dwelling. As any developer who has attempted to have a housing sub-division or other major housing proposal approved can attest, there seems to be a conspiracy among

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the various levels of government to deprive low and middle income families of suitable housing at reasonable cost. I base this statement on the fact that it can take up to two years or more to get a development plan approved by all the legislative bodies concerned. This has to increase costs enormously; costs that must be borne by the consumer.

Major developers have been quoted as saying they could reduce the cost of a house by 50 per cent, if not for bureaucratic red tape and the laggardly, out of date processing procedures employed by the three levels of government. The province of Ontario has made some strides in the last two years to streamline these procedures. Previous to this up to 40 ministries and agencies had to be consulted in order to approve a development proposal. I would like to read some comments from a Toronto newspaper on cutting housing costs in half. This article appeared in the *Toronto Star* and it stated:

Single-family housing could be provided in and around Metropolitan Toronto at half the present \$40,000-plus average price if only developers were given co-operation by government in place of restrictions and outright hostility.

That, at least, is the contention of four key figures in the development industry who took part in a round-table discussion of the urban housing problem.

The article then continued as follows:

Provincial Government financing of water and sewer services for privately held land ready for development, aimed at flooding the market with serviced land so as to drive down the price of a serviced lot—now at a record high \$22,000 average;

Relaxation, at least in specified areas, of a long list of restrictions on new subdivisions such as minimum lot sizes, requirement of elaborate local servicing and stipulations as to the type of building materials used.

Elimination of federal and provincial sales taxes on building materials totalling 17 per cent.

They reasoned that an over-supply of serviced lots would soon bring the price of a normal 50-by-100 foot lot back to the \$11,000 level current in Mississauga as recently as two years ago during a short period of surplus.

Beyond that, the price could be trimmed to about \$5,000 a lot by permitting single-family homes on lots 20 to 25 feet wide with a bare minimum of services—a good gravel road, open storm sewers and overhead power lines.

And the cost of the house itself—now about \$18,000 to \$20,000 for a three-bedroom bungalow—could be trimmed to about \$15,000 by eliminating the sales taxes and in some cases substituting cheaper materials, such as aluminum siding for brick veneer.

Another topic to be raised during tri-level discussions is a better system for taxation for so-called agricultural land owned by speculators on the outskirts of or adjacent to cities. Millions of dollars in profit are being made when these properties are sold. It is only fair that a portion of the profit be paid back to the communities in the form of a more equitable tax system than is in force in many locations.

Agricultural lands should be taxed on a deferred basis when they are developed or sold; that is, land which is re-zoned for residential development should be back taxed at the residential land assessment rate. Such an arrangement would not hurt the land owners appreciably since the increased tax could be deducted as an operating expense from their capital gains tax, but it would result in a great deal more money being available to the municipalities for servicing of land. Some provinces and cities