

wish to do a rational job in this field because the implications of first decisions are apt to be far-reaching.

In that context, Mr. Speaker, may I say that when I assumed responsibility for housing at the federal level I felt it was important that we should examine carefully priorities and objectives in the field of urban renewal. We learned much. I learned a great deal from those people I talked to. Nevertheless, we have a lot more to learn about urban renewal. We do not wish to rush ahead with any programs without giving full consideration to those kinds of representations. Some things have already become clear.

As I said a short time ago, the participation of citizens who are affected by urban renewal is essential to the success of that operation. In my opinion that participation must cut in at a very much lower level than it has in many of the urban renewal projects of the past. Careful consideration must be given to the rehabilitation of structures which must be saved. Municipalities should be prepared, surely, to adopt and enforce bylaws of maintenance and occupancy standards. Those bylaws are necessary if we are to get on with the job; otherwise renewed areas may deteriorate and fall back into the condition they were in originally. We will need to introduce new urban renewal programs all over again in that case. May I say that the cities of Toronto and Ottawa have made considerable strides in this field, as have many other centres in Canada.

In recent weeks I have talked to a number of mayors and their officials about their programs. I had the honour to address the mayors of Canada when they were gathered here in conference a few weeks ago and to explain to them the process of the study we have undertaken. All I can say in the face of all questions that have been asked is that I fully recognize the urgent necessity for decisions to be made on urban renewal projects. There have been long periods of planning, and we must act on commitments that have been made over the last few years. We have behind us about 148 plans that have to be acted on pretty quickly. We must bring in decisions on those as quickly as possible. I hope to proceed as quickly as possible to visit actual sites which are slated for renewal. I am sure that hon. members feel that the wisest course for me to follow is for me to visit these sites as quickly as possible. I may undertake another tour and do some on the spot examination of conditions.

29180—672

Alleged Failure to Cope With Urban Growth

There is much more that I could say on the subject but I will limit my remarks since I am sure other hon. members wish to take part in this debate. Much that I have to say would be a repetition of what I said on second reading of Bill C-192. As hon. members know, something has been done about land costs. We have widened the provisions with respect to land assembly to make land available for all housing purposes, and this program is being supported by other and further means of financing. I confess that I know of no simple solution to the complex problem of land costs; neither does anyone else with whom I have discussed this subject so far. It seems to me, however, that some headway can be made if the provinces and municipalities will themselves assume responsibility to a much greater extent than heretofore for the acquisition, planning, subdividing and servicing of residential land. Considerable progress could be made if that responsibility were assumed. After all, the next decade or two will be the decisive period in the planning of Canadian cities and, indeed, of our great urban regions. It has been said before, and I repeat it again, that the building of great cities cannot be measured simply in terms of size or efficiency. There is also the quality of the environment they provide for a healthy and satisfying life for the people.

The challenge of the city will call for the highest degree of co-operation between departments within government, between different levels of government and between all these and the building industry—the lenders, planners, architects, social scientists, as well as between all those and all other interested groups and professions. And more crucial than all this is the participation of the people directly affected. This participation I think will take diverse forms—forms which range from obstruction to zealous support, from special pleading to genuine community involvement and from widespread concurrence to, I suppose, painful conflicts of interest. It is only through the expression—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the minister but his time has expired.

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, I shall be finished in a couple of minutes.

Some hon. Members: Continue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Has the minister unanimous consent to continue?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.