

Housing Prices

ishment and create the services necessary to develop satellite cities or communities where people could live, instead of using arable land which is and will be so necessary for the production of food in the future?

We have to look at new policies and new ways of construction. We cannot forever put people in high-rise apartments, because they cannot stand this type of living: it does not appeal to all people. We are running into problems when we talk of land banks. We must have land to create the necessary space for building because we cannot have people living elbow to elbow without trouble. We can no longer tolerate the program that has been followed, where valuable farmlands surrounding existing municipalities have been tied up by local provincial and federal regulations, land which the owners cannot develop, land which is held in limbo and which could be utilized for agricultural purposes until such time as it may be designated for domestic or industrial use.

The answer lies in the creation of a land bank over which we would have absolute control and for which we would be responsible. This government proposes to tie up this land, the value of which is increasing every year because of the necessity of expanding our housing. Its present owners, the farmers, will have to pay a tremendous amount of income tax or capital gains tax and will not be able to profit from the development of their own land. The speculators will profit from it, not the owners.

Does it not seem right and justified that we should have a government department take possession of this land and do two things: guarantee a fair price for the land to the householder and a fair profit to the original owner of the land? We need an ordinary, common sense approach to housing, but we are not getting it. There is something wrong.

Some weeks ago I visited a new housing development because I was interested. I walked into the office where they were offering new houses for sale. There was a young couple in front of me. They were asking for reassessment of their payments. They were paying \$186 a month on their house and after three years of this they had paid only \$69 on the principal—all the rest of it had been taken up in expenses, insurance and interest. How would they ever be able to afford a house? This is what is wrong with the housing program of this government and I cannot understand why they cannot see it.

Mr. Gilbert: These are your financial mechanisms.

Mr. Danforth: What concerns me is that the minister seems more interested in asking people to read his speeches than in directing a policy of his party that will solve this problem.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Danforth: The finest speech in the world will not solve this problem. We must have a policy, and we cannot have policies that follow the same old line because they do not work. This has been proved. We must go out in new directions, and I say that the time to do so is now. Is it not a strange country in which we live, where people are desperate for houses and are living in tents while under

[Mr. Danforth.]

the agricultural policy of the government farmhouses are being abandoned and are falling into decay because there is no one to use them?

The taxes on farm property are so high that the farmers cannot afford to maintain their dwellings. Houses are being torn down, burned down or they fall down at a time when they are desperately needed in Canada. And the government is not even aware of this fact! My colleague has brought my attention to instances in Canada of property owners taking the roofs off their houses so they will not have to pay taxes on them. This is the situation when people are in desperate need of houses.

An hon. Member: Don't believe everything he says.

Mr. Danforth: It is not a question of believing, it is a question of grieving and this government does not see it. You cannot be proud of a record when people are without houses in Canada. We are talking about an affluent society, yet people live in garrets where normally you would not even keep an animal. Out of desperation people live there because they have to have a roof over their heads. This is what is going on in Canada today, and yet you talk about the record of this government. I would like to have time to talk about the record of the government.

An hon. Member: Go ahead; you have ten more minutes.

Mr. Danforth: We could get right back to a request that has been made by my party and by other parties on this side of the House, for the government to relieve the costs borne by householders directly by removing the sales tax on building materials. This action would make it possible immediately for householders at any level to buy a house at a cheaper price. But the government will not even consider this.

We have heard them speak about putting millions of dollars into a land bank, yet they tell us they cannot remove the 11 per cent sales tax on building materials because it might cost a few million dollars. Legislation is needed immediately to help these people. It will be a crying shame and a scandal if the government has held off this necessary legislation simply in a desperate attempt to win the next election. This is contemptible, but it is what we have to expect. There has been lots of time to bring in legislation. The government sets up the legislative program for Parliament; it is the government that brings in measures, not the opposition. Why have we not dealt with this problem until now?

• (1650)

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have an opportunity to speak on this subject today because I think it is time the public of Canada knew who is at fault. This government talks about leadership.

Mr. Dinsdale: What a joke.

Mr. Danforth: They cannot even make a speech unless it is written by someone in the department. What kind of leadership is this?

Mr. Basford: How is your research staff?

Mr. Danforth: Mr. Speaker, our research staff is just dandy. They were able to prove to us that the situation is