

Supply

money is available from the federal and provincial governments, but in the other article, in *La Presse*, entitled "\$11 million for housing restoration in Montreal", Mr. Gardiner, the city councillor responsible for housing in Montreal, said that if Montreal had not decided to put in the same amount of money, the Canada-Quebec restoration program would not have been as successful.

So you see, cooperation leads to municipalities putting in some money. In this way, we get the most leverage from federal and provincial funds.

So my question for the Minister is: Why is there not better coordination and cooperation among all levels of government? I include school commissions in that because they often have empty buildings and it seems that people do not talk to each other. Am I mistaken, Mr. Minister?

[English]

Mr. McInnes: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for the question which is appropriate and relevant. May I respond by saying quickly, and I do not want to be repetitive, that we have come to our housing policies through massive cross Canada consultations. The agreements we have, which involve the provinces, provide for a long range planning and short range programs to respond to immediate needs. Only last week, the Deputy Ministers of all of the provinces met with officials of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to see if there were any particular priorities. I am advised that the provinces indicated they are very pleased with the housing programs and the amount of co-operation which has resulted from this massive consultation and ongoing discussion and dialogue.

One of the most fundamental problems in Canada which impedes housing starts and appropriate responses to the homeless is regulatory reform. Two years ago I commissioned a study by the Federation of Municipalities, the Canadian Homebuilders Association and CAHRO officials to undertake a response to this increasing problem. In Toronto, which has been cited as a centre of increasing difficulty by many people in the House over the last two weeks, the biggest singular problem for securing appropriate and affordable housing is lack of regulatory reform.

It takes more than three years to get approval on a piece of land for a particular social housing project from beginning to end. That is obviously within the jurisdiction of the municipality. It is within the jurisdiction of municipalities across Canada and it is something that must be co-ordinated and addressed. We know the requirements of a municipality in one part of Ontario is very much different from another town and city just five miles away and, of course, they differ from province to province.

We need uniformity and we are going to address that in a meeting with the Federation of Municipalities in Halifax this June. The motion the Hon. Member proposed is appropriate. I

accept it. In response I say that we are following exactly that kind of format.

• (1640)

Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, the motion that is being debated this afternoon addresses housing shortfalls in various areas. I would like to move from the larger cities of our country to northern communities, in particular northern Ontario communities where there are also very great difficulties. I think of one such community in particular. It is Aroland near Nakina in the area of Geraldton where a *de facto* band has been hoping for a couple of years to be able to begin reserve establishment.

The determination of the Government not to provide funding to these bands which were given *de facto* recognition by the previous Minister, the now resigned Hon. Member for Rosedale, has exacerbated the housing situation in that community. This is one of the communities, to bring it more particularly to the point for the Minister to consider, where Frontiers Foundation has been at work in assisting in the rehabilitation of properties. The former Secretary of State had approaches from this foundation to obtain support for its administrative activity so that it could carry on the work of ensuring that rehabilitation went ahead in a context of being able to establish a reserve and to build the new houses that were wanted.

My question for the Minister arises from a refusal of the Government in these two areas. The first area is with respect to the refusal to fund new reserves. Second, there is the refusal to provide assistance to this voluntary, non-governmental organization that was doing something to meet the housing needs of aboriginal people which the Government was neglecting to meet.

Has the Minister paid any attention at all to the problems such as the ones being experienced at Aroland and other areas? I do not expect the Minister necessarily to pay a visit to Aroland to see the difficulties of persons who perch in their crude houses on the top of a sand dune on the northern CNR line through northern Ontario. Surely in case after case these are situations which cry out for action by the Government. Words in the House of Commons will not do it.

What has the Minister of Public Works (Mr. McInnes) in dealing with housing challenges in these small communities done to make any kind of difference at all?

Mr. McInnes: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member brings to our attention a geographical area of Canada which indeed has housing problems. There have been problems there for many years and there will be for a long period of time.

I was in the Northwest Territories about six weeks ago to visit smaller communities which are experiencing the difficulties that the Hon. Member has cited with a view to determining appropriate solutions in consultation and in co-operation