

National Housing Act

the areas of rural Canada that will be designated for special attention. Although I have not met the new minister, I feel, after watching him on television, that he is a man of action and shows promise. I hope he will get cracking and direct action to implement housing development for all of Canada. I sincerely hope that I have no cause for alarm at the trend of his speech which indicates he is listening to the advice of the intellectuals rather than being guided by the common sense of those who live with these problems.

As I have said in previous speeches in the house, beware of the book writers and the professors who have never been out of their laboratories and do not know what a piece of plywood looks like. I am concerned with some of the minister's phrases such as, "To modify and transcend market forces" or his remarks about filtering processes, constraints on the commitment of our productive resources, distributive justice, minimizing the stigma or make an analysis to effectiveness and adequacy. The object of the exercise is to build homes for Canadians with wood and bricks, using scientific methods to reduce costs. Common sense indicates we should have action now. Let us plan for the future, Mr. Speaker, but let us look after the problems that exist today.

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, it is not my intention in speaking on the issue now before the house to be critical of the past, to speak of the failures of this government or previous governments because those days are gone and cannot be reclaimed. It is my intention to speak of policies relating to the situation at the present time and as required in the future. It is not my intention to be hypercritical of the minister who has only had the responsibility of housing for a few short weeks. Nor is it my intention to actually deal with the specific issues in the bill now before us, except for two matters.

What I hope to do is to be able, from what knowledge I have, to stress the complexity of the problem of housing and the need for more than just the general action as we see it today. If we analyse what has happened over the years and visualize the needs of today, we will see the necessity for drastic action and far-reaching policy, and not be satisfied with what we have at the present time.

Under the redistribution before the last election the constituency of Vancouver East, which I have the honour to represent, was extended two-thirds of the way across Vancouver from Boundary Road to Oak Street.

The result is that within the boundaries of redistributed Vancouver East, there is a population which comprises those with the lowest incomes and the poorest housing, up through the average working class incomes and homes, right up to what I will term middle class structures. In at least one-third of my constituency there is a great need for rehousing. These people are not in an income group where they can afford to buy second-hand homes or build new homes under the present policies of the government. The absolute urgent need and minimum necessity is action now, not weeks, months or years ahead through urban renewal and public housing.

It is because of that need that I was so disappointed and distressed by the answers given by the minister replying to questions last Friday. In reply to a question I asked the minister said:

With regard to the urban renewal matter, I am reviewing this as quickly as possible. I am not in a position to make any definitive statement at this time but hope to give a clear statement within a matter of weeks.

I also wish to quote an answer the minister gave to the hon. member for Broadview (Mr. Gilbert):

Mr. Speaker, I thought I was reasonably clear in my statement on second reading. When we have had consultation with the provinces and determined what guidelines and new criteria will apply to each province, and the terms of their particular needs, and have made that kind of a decision then I hope to make these specific guidelines and terms public.

Those answers are not good enough, Mr. Speaker. Nor is it satisfactory to imply there is no knowledge of the proposals made by the municipalities, the provinces and in particular the city of Vancouver.

I wish to direct the minister's attention to a presentation from the city of Vancouver to the previous minister in charge of housing who is sitting in the front of the minister at the present time, the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer). This presentation was made on March 11 of this year. The city of Vancouver with the full knowledge of the need for public housing and urban renewal, made plans and submitted specific proposals to senior governments. I quote from this brief:

The City of Vancouver is increasingly concerned with the continuing federal government moratorium on urban renewal; specifically on requests for approval and financial aid made in 1968 to carry out two urban renewal programs scheduled to start at the beginning of 1969. These requests, relating to preparation of Urban Renewal Scheme 4A (downtown area)—