

*Adjournment Debate*

areas as though they were like anywhere else when they are not? The Government should issue as soon as possible a policy on housing in major metropolitan areas. If we make the effort and come forth with a creative and imaginative solution, we will find a response from people from one coast to another.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to discuss the federal government's initiatives in providing adequate and affordable housing for Canadians, particularly as it affects the people of Toronto.

The government is aware of the situation in Toronto and is monitoring the market very carefully. Of course the Hon. Member for Scarborough West (Mr. Stackhouse) is greatly interested in this question and keeps the Government aware of developments in that sector. We are all indebted to him.

Madam Speaker, the federal government is doing a great deal to facilitate the activities of the private market and is promoting access to and security of homeownership in a number of ways: through public mortgage insurance, the new *mortgage-backed securities* program, policies to support moderate and stable interest rates, and, more generally, through good economic management.

Since September 1984, the Ontario and Toronto economy has been booming. It may be the strongest economic area in North America. Madam Speaker, in 1987 there were 33,613 housing starts in the Toronto area, compared with 21,430 in 1986: a 57 per cent increase and 12,000 additional jobs.

The market is operating at capacity and federal government intervention would create an inflationary environment that can do more harm than good. It certainly would not help those in greatest need.

As the Hon. Member is aware all government funds are now being directed to those in greatest need. This applies to Toronto and throughout the rest of the country.

Because social housing is an area of shared federal/provincial responsibility, it has meant more funds than ever before are now being directed to those in greatest need. Madam Speaker, I vividly remember the representations which the Hon. Member for Scarborough made before our caucus and which prompted the Government to make this decision. Again, we are grateful to him.

In the Toronto area in 1987, the federal and provincial governments provided assistance to more than 2,200 units under the social housing and co-operative index-linked mortgage programs. This is more than 38 per cent of the total for Ontario. Over the past five years over 12,000 social housing units have been provided. This is in addition to the existing 100,000 households in the metro Toronto area already receiving federal assistance.

Madam Speaker, providing affordable housing is not exclusively a government concern. The Toronto area home-builders have recently brought forward interesting design proposals. The not-for-profit housing sector continues to be actively involved. Municipalities have an increasingly important role to play in ensuring the creation of affordable housing, as does the provincial Government.

The Hon. Member is quite right when stating that the situation in Toronto is tragic. I would hope that the provincial Government of Mr. Peterson—to a large extent it is responsible for finding the solutions required—will soon be in a position to unveil a policy to encourage contractors to build affordable housing units for Toronto residents.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES—USE OF FRENCH IN COURTS—REQUEST  
THAT DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER CONTACT SASKATCHEWAN  
PREMIER

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** On March 28, Madam Speaker, I directed a question to the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) to find out what his Government intended to do to encourage, urge and if necessary pressure certain provinces to recognize Canada's linguistic duality which they endorsed in the 1987 constitutional deal known as the Meech Lake Accord. I am referring to the situation which exists in particular in Saskatchewan where an historic decision rendered by the Supreme Court on February the 25th of this year completely changed the status of the linguistic rights of the French minority in that province and probably in Alberta as well. The whole affair began five years ago in 1983 when Father Mercure, a Saskatchewan resident was arrested for speeding by a police officer. Upon being issued a citation in English, Father Mercure decided to complain and demanded a speeding ticket in French. Moreover, he asked for a French copy of the Saskatchewan Motor Vehicle Legislation as well as a trial in French. After being turned down by various jurisdictions, his case was finally heard by the Supreme Court—

[English]

More specifically, the appellant wanted to know whether Section 110 of the Northwest Territories Act continued to apply to Saskatchewan by virtue of the Saskatchewan Act, and whether the rights derived from this section require the Saskatchewan legislature to publish its laws in English and French. Furthermore, the appellant wanted to know if he has the right to use the French language in proceedings before the Saskatchewan courts as derived from Section 110.

The Supreme Court said yes to all those questions. This judgment invalidates all provincial laws adopted since 1905 in Saskatchewan because they were unilingual English and established the right to speak French before the courts and the legislatures.

[Translation]

From a strictly legal point of view, Madam Speaker, the situation is clear. Either the province translates all the statutes