

*Supply—Labour*

money is thrown into the market; when the economy is good the flow is cut off and the building industry is ruined.

This sort of situation has been perpetuated over the years. Clients of mine have gone bankrupt because, having started projects with the promise that they would get the money, Ottawa has then turned off the tap and the projects have had to be abandoned. Therefore I suggest that the government has never treated the supply of mortgage money as a permanent need because it has never accepted housing as a proper social requirement. This is another criticism that has been made over the years.

The problem that the minister tried to solve a year or two ago has not been resolved. There is now no adequate machinery for consultation among the provinces, the municipalities and the federal government. Without it there is absolutely no hope of ever solving the housing crisis.

Most of the points which will be developed in detail will be handled by other members of our party as the debate proceeds, but in closing I want to reiterate what I said earlier. Like the minister, all of us are concerned about this problem. All of us are wrestling with it, looking for a solution. But there can be no solution until the government in Ottawa declares, first of all, that there is a crisis, second, that it is prepared to grapple with it and, third, that it is prepared to begin working the problem out by setting up a ministry devoted to housing needs and nothing else.

Even if the government took this step, Mr. Chairman, I do not think there would be any quick solution. There are inadequacies everywhere. The minister talks of 16,000 public housing units; Toronto alone is short of 25,000. Only 3 per cent of our housing production is devoted to public housing needs as against 12 to 25 per cent in most other developing countries. So we are a long way behind even in this regard.

Neither is there a program to meet the needs of the old age pensioners. In my constituency old age pensioners cannot rent homes if they have only their old age pension because they do not have sufficient funds to pay the rent. They would need to supplement their income. I suggest that most young people in the country today who are getting married will never own a home as long as they live. This is a pretty serious situation for our country.

**Mr. Ryan:** That is a pretty wild statement.

**Mr. Scott (Danforth):** My hon. friend from Spadina interjects. I hope he will make a speech and give us the benefit of his remarks. The hon. member says that is a wild statement.

**Mr. Ryan:** I should like to ask the hon. member how he is so positive that the province of Ontario is so eager to co-operate. How does he know that?

**Mr. Scott (Danforth):** Because, Mr. Chairman, I have done what this government has not done; I have talked to the officials in Ontario.

**Mr. Nicholson:** Would the hon. member permit another question? Does he know of a single application for a public housing loan which has come to Ottawa in the last few years that has not been dealt with very promptly?

• (4:40 p.m.)

**Mr. Scott (Danforth):** That is not the point. My criticism is that members of the government sit in their seats and wait for people to come to them. Where is the leadership? Parliament passes a law—and we in this chamber were glad to pass it—and then hon. gentlemen opposite sit on their “fannies” and do nothing to see that it is carried out. That is the big problem. The hon. gentleman and his friends should get out and sell this legislation to the public. This is what they are not doing, and this is why public housing in this country is a joke. It is failing because the government declines to go out and sell its own program. I recognize that the minister does not have the time to do all this. He is a part time minister, and we regret that. There are plenty of teeth in the National Housing Act if it is properly used, but at the present time it is not being promoted properly.

I wish we could all accept the fact of the housing crisis. We are not talking about statistics but about people who are suffering. They are not rows of figures such as the minister reads into the pages of *Hansard*. They are citizens of this country and they deserve better treatment than they have been getting at the hands of the government.

If we do not begin to make a serious attack on the housing problems of our growing cities, future parliaments will curse us. We have the affluence, we have the facts, if we could assemble them, we have the knowledge, we have the technical skills that are required, we have the manpower. All that is needed is the will. If we had the will we could solve Canada's housing crisis.