

*Supply*

in the construction materials. Now the roads have thawed and there is no way that anything can be built in those communities in 1986, or until the spring or late winter of 1987.

There is a similar problem on many Indian reserves in British Columbia because of delays occasioned by the Governments, even though the federal Government is going it alone in British Columbia because of that provincial Government's notoriously hostile attitude to social housing. I give the federal Government credit for being willing to go it alone; but the delay has been so long that many of these units on Indian reserves will not be built.

The Minister has made much of his consultation, as if it were an excuse for all the delay. Yet he bragged this morning about the agreement reached with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. It is not in agreement with him at all. I have a letter from the President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Alderman Ron Cromwell of Halifax, in which he points out:

The FCM and our member municipalities expected that income ceilings for RRAP participation would be established in consultation with interested groups. FCM is concerned that CMHC's proposed eligibility formula, based on a product of income related to household size, will exclude many households warranting RRAP assistance. We are further concerned about the lack of consultation on this new formula which will dramatically reduce the scope of the program.

Of course there has been consultation which took place nearly a year ago, at the outset, and just for show. But at the crunch, when things are being decided, people have had to wait in the dark. There are more problems with the Government's venture of instituting this core program, but I want to generalize a little further. It goes beyond the core need concept.

The Government has yet to produce a corporate plan for 1986. We have yet to receive program specifications, except with respect to the co-op movement which, as I say, the Minister has decided to treat separately from the rest of social housing. We do not have the number of units; we do not have the number of dollars available to each provincial expression of the program. We do not have the criteria. In Toronto they have been promised these things all year.

One of the leaders of CAHRO, about which the Minister bragged, is the Housing Commissioner for Toronto. He was trying to provide RRAP for a Toronto resident who needed it in order to get his wheelchair out of his house. Eventually, he needed it to get to the hospital for some regular treatments. He could not get it. After months and months of promises there was no criteria, no allocation, no funding. He had to spend his own money, his own pension money, on a taxi to get to the hospital.

It is the concept of core need which is wrong. It is wrong because it belittles the needy. It blames the victim. It degrades them as being people who allegedly cannot pay for their housing as other people allegedly can. It also belittles the numbers of the needy and brings us into hair-splitting disputes at times about just whether somebody fits a certain program or not.

What is necessary is to recognize housing in Canada as a right, not as a need of certain incompetent or unfortunate individuals, but as a right of all persons in this country. In Canada, we live in a cold climate and most people live in cities which have become highly industrialized. We are dependent upon each other. One person builds a house in which another will live, and often the people who build houses cannot afford to live in them. In a country in which we are interdependent like this, housing must be treated as a right belonging to each person.

● (1420)

We have already established that concept in the case of public education. That is a right provided to everyone. We have established the concept fairly well in the case of health care. Health care is a right for everyone, rich and poor. Even before that, we established that concept in the case of food. We decided that no one should go without food; we call that welfare.

What is needed is not a core need program but a national housing program. As I have said before, a national housing program should embody six principles. First, housing should be decent and affordable. Publicly owned and privately owned rental housing should be subject to rent control with rent registration. There should be a national home building program to create 500,000 units needed by families and singles presently without decent, affordable housing, and there should be co-operatively or publicly produced and owned housing since the private industry has demonstrated in the last two decades that it cannot produce the housing people need. There are empty condominiums sitting in Toronto while some of those who live in that city go homeless, with a vacancy rate of .3 per cent.

Existing substandard housing should, wherever practical, be rehabilitated with government assistance and not with a half-year rate as provided for by the Minister. This should be done so that the costs are not completely passed on to the tenants in increased rents. The Government should assist tenants to buy buildings for either co-operative or non-co-operative ownership to ensure responsible maintenance and to take the buildings out of the inflationary market. There should be public and private funds created for mortgages with interest rates at no more than 2 per cent above the rate of inflation for families or persons buying, building or repairing a principal residence.

Those are the points that must be embodied in a national housing plan. The federal Government should negotiate such a plan with the other jurisdictions, should outline the five-year plan with annual targets and reports and should bring it to Parliament so that it may be publicly debated. It should do that rather than secretly negotiate the plan as the Minister has been doing. This is what we need to meet the needs of not just a few of the people of Canada, as the Minister wishes to do, but the needs of all of the people of Canada so that we may live together as brothers and sisters.