

*National Housing Act*

very few Canadians can find any housing or, at least, good housing, at this price. The result is, of course, that many thousands of Canadians living on low incomes pay a much higher proportion of those incomes for housing than is proper.

Each of these problems is bad enough in itself, but the two are often combined—bad housing and high prices. In human terms, the price is one which Canada cannot afford. This is why the modest effort presented to the house by the minister will receive our support and why we insist that much more must be done.

The proposed amendment to section 35C will be useful in connection with the land assembly program as well as for public housing and residential development. It is all to the good. I notice that the minister, in order to get the loans for this land assembly program going, is consulting with the provinces—at least, that is my understanding. I say this is right. It should have been done at the outset when the task force began its operations. I emphasize the need for speedy action. Programs involving land assembly take time before becoming effective and this one should have been under way long since. It should have been in high gear by this time.

As the operation of supply and demand continues, land prices continue to spiral. The results are all too clear for us to see. While over-all housing costs rose by 80 per cent between 1961 and 1968, the price of serviced land increased by 240 per cent. This is why we in our party have for some time placed emphasis on the need for the federal government to involve itself in a land bank program even though many supporters of the party opposite described this during the election campaign as socialism. I must stress how far short the minister's program falls of what is required in connection with housing in Canada today. I want, for the good of the country, indeed for the sake of the very unity of the country, to force this government to understand that the need for housing is in many cases critical and desperate and to come to terms with the long range underlying economic factors which have produced this crisis in housing affecting Canadians with low incomes.

Housing cannot be considered in isolation. It must be considered in relation to broader economic programs. Obviously, inflation has a great bearing on the difficulties which many experience in connection with housing. Continued inflation imposes a particularly serious

burden on Canadians receiving lower incomes. I must once again describe the efforts of this government to combat inflation as halfhearted and ineffective. There is no need for me to elaborate. It is sufficient to say that the only program so far adopted by the government to fight inflation has been the establishment of a prices and incomes commission recommended, after many months of delay, in December. The chairman of this commission was appointed only this month and as far as we know the balance of the commission has yet to be appointed.

An adequate housing program must be integrated with an effective anti-poverty program. The Economic Council has documented the incidence of poverty in Canada. Yet the government abandoned the war against poverty even before it was begun; any machinery which had been set up to co-ordinate an effective approach was dismantled despite the fact the Economic Council had called on the government of Canada to accept the challenge of poverty in the nation and to meet with the provinces for the purpose of mapping out an integrated attack. As far as we can see, nothing has been done in this regard.

Then, of course, in addition to general economic programs, the control of inflation and an effective integrated anti-poverty program, policies related to environment are obviously essential in carrying out a housing program on any scale. The minister talks about pollution but little action is taken, and I am sure there is no effective organization within the government to develop, let alone carry out, effective, co-ordinated programs or to provide leadership in this country in the battle against pollution. Indeed, if one looks at the over-all housing policy, if one considers the attitude of the government toward inflation, if one considers the lack of any organized attack upon poverty, one is impressed only by the chaos which exists in government planning. In fact, I would say that the chaos in this field is almost as bad as the chaos which has developed in the area of national defence.

The proposals of the government as put forward by the minister are halfhearted. Why was it necessary for the people of Canada to wait a whole year for this little program which is now being proposed? Why should the people looking for housing, the people experiencing housing difficulties, have to wait a whole year for the government to come forward with these inadequate proposals? I suggest part of the reason is that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has a constitutional hang-up. And part of the reason is that he