

*Alleged Failure to Cope With Urban Growth*

over 20,000 units under these programs, which I am sure you will agree is a serious indication of our purpose in this area.

Closely related to the issue of housing for low income people is the problem of blight that characterizes the areas where many of them live in our cities—the problem of urban renewal. Successive amendments to the National Housing Act have made available generous grants and loans to provinces and municipalities to enable them to tackle the problems of urban blight and functional obsolescence. The availability of federal funds has generated a great deal of interest across Canada in these important questions.

The federal government has made available grants to municipalities for city-wide urban renewal studies. One hundred and eighty municipalities have taken advantage of the 75 per cent federal grants for this purpose and have completed or are in the process of completing such studies. Those municipalities will have available to them information on the social, economic and physical problems related to old neighbourhoods and to those areas of the city where the urban pattern is no longer functional. This program of urban renewal studies has served as more than an instrument of renewal. It has also triggered and been useful in one of the most important, broad urban planning ventures ever undertaken on a national scale.

In addition, the federal government has assisted 132 municipalities to prepare schemes for areas determined and identified as in need of renewal by these city-wide studies. Grants totalling \$3.5 million have been committed for this purpose.

Finally, the federal government has committed \$168 million to assist municipalities to implement urban renewal schemes.

This program has grown quite rapidly, from relatively insignificant proportions to one of the most important areas of concern, in the short span of the last half a dozen years. Perhaps because of its very rapid growth we find today serious questions being asked from many directions about urban renewal, such as questions about citizen participation. During the last two or three weeks some very interesting delegations have come to see me about this matter. For example, a delegation from Chinese communities across Canada came to see me to express their concern. Here is a kinship group, an ethnic group that looks after its own and stands together. It has cohesive unity and is to be respected. In North America, in the name of

[Mr. Andras.]

urban renewal policies and under other policies, hundreds of so-called Chinatowns have been eliminated to the extent that today there are 16 or less.

In addition, the Kensington market people came to see me four or five weeks ago at a time when I was immersing myself in the jargon of housing, and I was able to recognize the alienation of this group. Nobody has talked to this group or consulted them about bulldozing their home and demolishing this area, the very place where they have felt safe and secure. Surely this sort of feeling among people must be recognized, and certainly it has been put before me. This is one of the dilemmas that is facing me in so many of the urban renewal projects that are put before me for final approval. I want to consult such groups before we move blithely ahead in the name of progress.

**Mr. Alexander:** Would the minister permit one question in this regard?

**Mr. Andras:** Yes.

**Mr. Alexander:** Will the minister advise us whether he is going to make a tour of the 12 cities that happen to be involved in urban renewal before he comes to a decision? Many of us would like to know whether this is the case and it is a suggestion the minister might pursue. Certainly I should like to know whether the minister intends to visit these cities, including Hamilton, before he comes to a decision on federal government involvement.

**Mr. Andras:** I assure the hon. member I have no program that would deliberately delay action in this respect. I do not think the hon. member would want me to be a rubberstamp.

**Mr. Alexander:** Oh no.

• (4:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Andras:** I think the hon. member would want me conscientiously to examine the problems and to find out whether I have the whole story from those who are affected. But I assure the hon. member I have no intention of making marks on a map or headlines in a paper. I do not have all the answers today but I think that a systematic tour may perhaps be helpful. I think some of these problems I have alluded to can be resolved fairly quickly. Although the hon. member who proposed this motion labours under pressures, I hope he will support me. I