

Urban Affairs

windows are concerned, sometimes there is only one or none at all, for lack of space.

Such is the situation in Toronto and in downtown Montreal and Winnipeg. By the way, Mr. Speaker, the Montreal financiers who managed to start a project sponsored under the CMHC urban renewal program or the federal-provincial urban renewal scheme had some very good houses torn down on Dorchester Boulevard in Montreal. That is where you come from, Mr. Speaker, you must be aware of that. What are they doing with these properties now? Nothing at all. For lack of funds, these financiers who own the land are doing nothing, because the City of Montreal made other plans. Even if they do nothing, they still own these properties. What are they waiting for? They are waiting for the prices to go up. They wait till they can build skyscrapers and make profits. And all that with our money.

This must change. First there is need, I think, for the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation to gain nearly complete control over investments. I mean that large financing institutions like banks and trusts, having their headquarters in cities—as the Montreal Trust and the Royal Trust in Montreal or Toronto—endeavour as much as possible to make important loans to large cities.

Within a few years, we will come to the stage now reached in New York. Everybody had to invest there. People are so stupid they will all stay in New York, so huddled together that it is impossible to walk in the streets because of crowds. The very same situation exists in Montreal.

Through government and according to financial guidelines given to him, the minister should forbid the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation to approve such projects in order to protect man against himself. There should be no community so big that pollution and many other problems would fall upon us tomorrow.

The minister has indicated a moment ago that sewers were a source of problems in the cities, and I understand him. The way things are going, they can only become worse. All investments are made in the cities, nothing is left for rural areas. Many excuses are given to rural communities. However, there is air, nice lands, space to build to one's content. People can make gardens, grow flowers, and lead adequate lives. But this is met with numerous objections. Does everybody work in this region? Is employment stable?

I think most people nowadays forget that cars make it easy to commute 25 or 30 miles to work. Mr. Speaker, I agree with the minister's \$100 million expenses, for I think that he has made extraordinary efforts to pull the government out of the present housing dilemma.

I hope he will continue in this way to improve the situation of the less fortunate so that one day they may find adequate housing at a reasonable price.

Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker, ever since this minority government has been in power, this House has been given strange shows on many occasions. It has sometimes been funny, and even fascinating at times. Once more, today, we get a first rate performance. The official opposition has indicated to the government, on behalf of the people of Canada, that it is to blame

[Mr. Beaudoin.]

for wasting a sum of \$100 million. A few weeks ago, the whole opposition was unanimous in making this kind of criticism against the government.

But a few minutes ago the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent), who had personally violently criticized the government, spoke on behalf of his party and reconsidered his opinion, declaring that he will manage to cast a confidence vote for the government tonight, and he said: Wait till the presentation of the budget, and watch our vote.

Well, that was another clownish somersault to which we are getting used, but not the Canadian people. When those members vote tonight, of course, there will be a huge burst of laughter in the House, which will be heard all across Canada. Those members too, along with the government, will have lost the confidence of Canadians. We were also treated to a show by the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Basford) who is a nice, easy-going fellow who has all our sympathy today. We felt that he was noticeably embarrassed, ill at ease, confused, and for good reason, faced with the almost impossible mission of bringing before Parliament a policy that did not even exist, of justifying before the Parliament the activities of a government which, in the particular area of inflation, has completely failed.

Mr. Speaker, I was shocked right at the start to hear the minister complain along these lines: It is not the government that does not understand anything, it is not the government that is falling short of the target. And he explains that the misunderstanding and the ignorance of the press and the opposition are to blame for every thing. According to the minister, the press and the opposition are the ones who did not understand the great works planned by the government; it is right while everybody else is out of step.

Mr. Speaker, we had grown accustomed to such behaviour and wranglings from the government for some time. Today during the question period we had another example of the internal fights among the ministers who do not care about solidarity and are not pulling together. We were getting used to that. But today there is something else. When the minister admitted being unable to solve the housing problems of the country, he joined the ranks of all the other ministers who confessed their failures in the fields of transportation, communications, energy.

Mr. Speaker, we heard some rather extraordinary confessions recently. Those people got it off their chests, they made a clean breast of it all, they owned up to the whole country to being unable to solve the problems, they say they lacked the necessary means of powers and they should be forgiven for the failure since 1968. The situation reminds me of what happened at one point in the USSR where, after Stalin's death, everyone said to the population: Forgive us our mistakes, we shall not repeat them, we are now entering a new era.

● (1700)

Mr. Speaker, when I see the ministers contriving, it reminds me of a government of streakers which has become a household word. The members of the cabinet have pre-eminently become streakers. As streakers, they have stripped off their clothes, which are ideas, imagina-