

Mr. BEECROFT: All of us who have been talking about community planning in the last 13 years since the war are just beginning to realize that in the next 12 or 13 years one of our big problems of implementation is to face up to this question of how to control the development of land by purchase. In many parts of Canada, a great deal has been accomplished to implement planning by zoning. My prediction would be that one of our biggest problems in the next few years will be how to assemble land, create a master plan and to get the planning action implemented, whether by purchase or by zoning or by some other method.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Beecroft, very much. I shall now ask Mr. Bates if he will come forward. As I have already stated, gentlemen, there seems to be a very keen interest in low-cost housing. Some of the officers interested in planning and designing have come, and in addition Mr. Bates himself is here and has had a brief prepared, which I am going to ask him to read. When he has concluded his brief, the committee will be open for questions, and I shall ask Senator Crerar to ask questions first, because I am afraid I shut him off a moment or two ago.

Senator CRERAR: I shall not interrupt Mr. Bates while he reads his brief.

Mr. Stewart Bates (President, Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation): Gentlemen, I understand you wish me to make a statement regarding the provision of housing for low-income families. May I deal with this under two headings. First, what is the National Housing Act contributing to the solution of the housing problems of families of lower income? And second, what can be done to reduce the cost of housing.

Most families with incomes of less than \$3,000, do not live in new houses. Families with this low an income, particularly in urban areas, more often than not rent accommodation and usually the rentals which they can afford limit them to the older properties. Where families in this income bracket want to buy a house of their own, they usually find that they cannot afford to buy a new house—any more than they can afford to buy a new car.

The National Housing Act, as you know, provides financial assistance only for the building of new housing. This is a matter of Government policy. Any suggestion to assist in the purchase of existing housing would require an amendment to the Act by Parliament.

We have, of course, special programmes aimed at providing low-cost housing, and particularly low-cost rental housing, and I shall have more to say about this in a moment. But the vast majority of the houses built under the Act are beyond the means of the families in the lower third of the income range. However, I should point out that we can still make a very large indirect contribution. Anything that increases the rate of new housebuilding must, in time, have an effect on the general living conditions of all Canadians. Indeed, one of the reasons why so many families live in poor housing today is the fact that the rate of housebuilding in the past has not always been adequate. I am thinking particularly of the thirties and early forties when the rate of new housebuilding fell to very low levels. In many years the number of new houses built was not enough to take care of the increase in the number of families living in the country. The shortage has tended to sustain the price of old houses. Moreover, some of the older housing that might have been expected to prove uneconomic and been torn down has continued in existence because of the continued high demand for housing. So I am saying, therefore, that the provision of new housing, no matter what price range it goes in at, will ultimately help to ease the housing problems of all families, including those in the lower income brackets.