

Adjournment Debate

year. We might say that those 2,200 units were for the 30,000 people who moved into Vancouver in 1980, not in 1981.

Considering the exploding population and the very serious housing crisis on the west coast, the actions of CMHC have not been adequate, in my view. With the greatest humility and the greatest respect, I would ask the department and the minister to go over the figures again. They should look at what is happening on the west coast and at the continuing tragedy in the housing situation. If the minister does not take action to change his priorities, the situation will worsen in 1981.

Some facts and figures may be useful, Mr. Speaker. In 1979 there were 12,827 housing starts on the west coast, and 3,576 CMHC loans; in 1980, 16,780 starts and 2,440 CMHC loans; at the end of January, 1981, 1,492 starts and 10 CMHC loans. In 1979, 3,054 units were approved by CMHC; in 1980, 2,117 housing units were approved by CMHC and perhaps the most tragic figure of all, with an anticipated 30,000 new residents in the greater Vancouver area in 1981, 888 units were approved by CMHC.

Let me break down the figures for 1980, Mr. Speaker, because I think it is important to understand how much they contributed to the alleviation of the severe housing crisis on the west coast. In 1980, 333 units were constructed for provincial use, mostly for senior citizens, and no one disagrees with that. There were 498 intermediate units for seniors' care; 446 hostel beds for halfway houses, battered wives, etc; 28 reserve housing for Indian reserves in the province, and six rural native units.

The two areas where some help has been given are the 621 units for the Greater Vancouver Housing Corporation and the 1,689 co-operative housing units, roughly 2,200 units in all. I believe that is what the minister referred to when he answered my question. But those figures refer to last year, Mr. Speaker, not this year. Last year, 30,000 people moved into the lower mainland. This aggravated the shortage, caused doubling-up and the opening of many illegal suites, unsanitary conditions and basement accommodation. Another 30,000 people will move in this year. As I said to the minister, only 800 units are available for 30,000 people—perhaps I should say 3,000 for 60,000 people, if the minister wants to add the 1980 starts to the 1981 figures. It is a deplorable situation, and I think CMHC could and should do much more.

The answer I received from the minister last Thursday would show that he feels although the situation is severe, 3,000 units is not bad. I think 3,000 units is a drop in the bucket considering the number of people coming from Ontario and the rest of Canada to the lower mainland.

I suggest to hon. members opposite that some of the people who will not find accommodation at the coast or who will not be able to afford it, may be the sons and daughters of voters in their ridings. If I cannot make the point, then I hope those young people will write to their moms and dads telling them the problems they have run into when trying to get housing. Perhaps they will look at what we have said tonight about this issue and realize where the blame lies. Something should be done about this.

● (2215)

[Translation]

Mr. D. M. Collette (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, in responding further to the hon. member for North Vancouver-Burnaby (Mr. Cook) about the British Columbia housing market, I should like to emphasize the fact that the government has made a number of important moves to help alleviate the situation. In addition, there is every indication that the housing market is responding to the high levels of demand.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that last year the government increased the national allocation of 25,000 social housing units by some 5,000 additional units. Of these, British Columbia received a total of 1,569 additional units. Also, a further special allocation of some 1,100 units was made in December, 1980, to the Vancouver area. In other words, the federal government provided an additional 2,669 units over and above the regular 1980 allocation in response to British Columbia's pressing needs. Most of these non-profit and co-operative housing units will be coming on stream this year. I am pleased that this assistance has been made available and I am confident that it will go a long way in meeting the need for social housing in British Columbia. Furthermore, 3,730 non-profit and co-operative units have been allocated to British Columbia for 1981. This represents an increase of some 70 per cent over last year's original allocation, in direct response to British Columbia market conditions.

I should like to underline the fact, Mr. Speaker, that starts have increased dramatically in the province, in response to demand.

Once these units come on stream, they will be an important factor in alleviating the situation. In 1980, total starts in British Columbia were some 37,500 units, up more than 10,000 from 1979, an increase of 37 per cent. We are forecasting a record year for housing in British Columbia this year with an estimated 38,000 housing starts. As the hon. member is aware, the government also reinstated the MURB program in the last federal budget. This was in direct response to the tight rental situation in major market areas in Canada. It is expected that the reinstated program will result in 10,000 new units of which a large portion will be built in British Columbia. I might also add that the building industry in the province is operating near capacity.

[English]

PARLIAMENT—COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS FOR EMPLOYEES

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to follow up on a question which I asked of the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) on February 18 last concerning the extension of collective bargaining rights to employees on Parliament Hill. At that time I pointed out that recently the Special Joint Committee on the Constitution of