

Housing

What did the government do having done all that? What did the government do to stimulate the building of rental accommodation? How did the government react to this crisis? The government cancelled the MURB program which it estimated produced 25,000 housing starts per annum and replaced it with a program designed to loan \$7,500 per unit, interest free, to builders of up to 15,000 units. The net effect was that we lost 10,000 rental units. That is a terrific way to approach a vacancy rate crisis.

Furthermore, the government has totally abandoned the law of supply and demand in favour of bureaucratic action. Whatever the inadequacies of the MURB program at least we knew the market would dictate where they were built. These units would be built where the demand existed. Now we know these units will be built where the bureaucrats designate. These are the same bureaucrats who brought us the budget of November 12 and they are now going to allocate the interest-free loans. They are the ones who will do it. In Oshawa, which has a zero vacancy rate, what will be done about the 232 units they presently have under administration which are vacant. Those are the same bureaucrats who want to allocate rental accommodation for Canadians.

Given the budget's lack of reality, is there any Canadian who thinks that those loans are going to be allocated properly? Given this government's past actions, are there any Canadians who think that those rental units and loans are going to be allocated fairly?

In my riding of Simcoe North, we are facing a crisis vacancy rate. There is a vacancy crisis in Orillia and Midland. What guarantee do we have from the minister that some of those interest-free loans will be allocated to interested developers in the smaller communities of Canada? Quite frankly, I am not worried about Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. I am worried about my riding. The people of my riding sent me here. How many units will the government allocate to the riding of Simcoe North?

Mr. Kelly: What do you need?

Mr. Lewis: Let us find out what we need. We need some help from the government.

Mr. Kelly: Give us a number.

Mr. Lewis: We need some of those loans.

Mr. Kelly: Give us a number.

Mr. Lewis: I hear an interjection from the hon. member for Scarborough Centre (Mr. Kelly). Since he is connected with a constituent of mine, and without reading out the name of the constituent, I would like to make one comment just to set the record straight.

An hon. Member: Name him.

Mr. Lewis: This is what my constituent says about the government represented by the hon. member for Scarborough Centre:

In the past, we have had our ups and downs, but I never really worried about the future. Right now though, I am worried as I just cannot see any future.

That is what the government of the hon. member for Scarborough Centre has done for his brother. I am sorry, I will get back to my text. I was a little bit thrown off there.

Mr. Beatty: Suddenly there is silence on the other side.

Mr. Lewis: I would like to suggest something to the minister and I do this with all sincerity. I have practised law in a small town, and I was in business before that. Prior to 1971 when the government allowed losses on rental accommodation ventures, they were deductible against other income. As a result, multiple unit dwellings were not owned exclusively by doctors, dentists and the occasional lawyer as a tax dodge. They were owned by mechanics, farmers and by service station owners. These are the people who own, bought and built the triplexes, the duplexes and the sixplexes all across Canada. They applied any loss they incurred against other income, and they provided rental accommodation. But, when this government wiped out that ability to balance off income losses on rental properties against other income, the rental accommodation was wiped out.

I suggest very sincerely to the government that it take a hard look at bringing that incentive back, because it has gone. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that this bill is a tragedy at a time when Canadians are renewing their mortgages at the horrendous rates advocated, supported and propagated by this government. I suggest that the Liberal government has brought forward the weakest solution imaginable.

Mr. Beatty: Paul Cosgrove.

Mr. Lewis: The government completely ignores the stated housing policy of the Progressive Conservative Party to see that every Canadian has a right to accessibility to decent affordable housing.

Mr. Turner: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I understand there was a delay in the reprinting of Bill C-78 which resulted in some members not being able to give notice of amendments.

Pursuant to Standing Order 75(5), and in order to be fair to all members, since this bill will be called tomorrow, would the House give leave to extend the deadline for giving notice to proposed amendments to Bill C-78 until ten o'clock tonight for tomorrow's consideration and until five o'clock Friday for consideration Monday or thereafter.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. I see two hon. members rising. Are they both standing on the same point of order?

Mr. Lewis: Yes, I am, Mr. Speaker. I cannot see any difficulty with that but I would like to have the opportunity to discuss the matter with my House leader. I can do that within the next ten minutes and get back to the hon. member. This is the first notice we have had of the offer. We would have appreciated some advance warning but we find that this is the