

average small home owner in this country into high interest rates for the rest of his natural life? Is that the best they can do to help the housing situation in this country?

I am surprised, because surely they do not expect present high interest rates to continue. Surely they expect a government to be elected in this House which is going to get interest rates down. Surely under these circumstances they would be the first to say that the average small home owner in this country should be entitled at the first roll-over opportunity to the benefits of these lower, declining interest rates. I should hope they would do better than that and I can assure hon. members that the next government of Canada will get these interest rates down, and then we will hear a different tune from our friends in the far corner. What they are proposing is a real tragedy, namely, a burden which could be crushing to small home owners in Canada. I will return to the question of interest rates later, Mr. Speaker. In the meanwhile, I should like to talk about land banking.

The time to have acted was five years ago when the task force made its report. The hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies) was a member of that task force and he made a very real and very considerable contribution to the writing of that report. The hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi (Mr. Grafftey) was an unofficial member of that task force. He travelled with us from coast to coast. He often rode with us and he listened to our deliberations. Interestingly enough—I think this is important—he came very largely to the same conclusions as did the members of the task force and he was very much in sympathy and in harmony with the recommendations made and published in the task force report.

An hon. Member: Did you say that at the time?

Mr. Hellyer: Yes, as a matter of fact I did. Although land was expensive five years ago, it was not outrageously expensive. Perhaps it was a little bit outrageous, but certainly not as outrageous as it is at the present time. I should like to give an example in Toronto. Not only is it the city, part of which I represent in the House of Commons, but it probably represents the extreme case. In Toronto, in the spring of 1969, you could buy a standard serviced lot for about \$10,000; in some cases a little more and in some cases a little less, but approximately \$10,000 for a fully serviced lot 50 feet by 120 feet. What is the price today? The same standard lot 50 feet by 120 feet in metropolitan Toronto costs today \$35,000. In only five years the price of the standard minimum lot in metropolitan Toronto has escalated from \$10,000 to \$35,000, and every house purchaser in metropolitan Toronto is today paying \$25,000 more for his or her house because of the failure of this government to act five years ago.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hellyer: The task force could see what was going to happen and I could see what was going to happen; and of the recommendations to cabinet on February 14, 1969, the most important was the one which would make available to the municipalities 100 per cent financing for the acquisition of land and—and this is important, Mr. Speaker—for the installation of sewers, water and roads so they would have available an inventory, not just a moose pas-

ture, of lots which could be easily converted to suit the housing requirements of the people of Canada. The government, in its arrogant blindness and callousness, could not or would not act.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hellyer: People ask why we have runaway inflation today. It is due to this kind of lack of foresight, because nothing could have had a greater impact on the cost of housing in the metropolitan area of Toronto than this escalation of \$25,000 a lot in the period of five years. Of course, the extra cost with regard to other types of accommodation is more or less parallel, because whether it be for apartment buildings, for semi-detached or condominium type accommodations, the increase in cost is approximately proportional to that increase which is incredible in its magnitude.

The minister said this afternoon he has federal-provincial types of land banking arrangements and he is now entering into federal-municipal land banking arrangements. I wonder if this government will ever learn. I have reason to doubt it.

An hon. Member: Not this one.

Mr. Stanfield: Not these fellows.

Mr. Hellyer: Why does it have to meddle in the internal affairs of the provinces and the internal affairs of municipalities? Does CMHC have to have its fingers into every pie? Why cannot the government of Canada adopt a policy similar to that recommendation of 1969? It was a recommendation, the great feature of which was its simplicity, under which money would be made available instantly to the municipalities to do the job that is theirs under the constitution of Canada. The government of Canada would restrict its activity to its own responsibility, which under our constitution is the money and banking aspect.

If under our constitution the government of Canada would keep its nose out of other people's business and do properly its own business, living up to its own responsibilities, then we could make some progress in this country toward solving the problems that face us. The government has failed in its responsibility. Joint land banking is too slow, too complex and too expensive. It is all right to start now—better now than never, I would say, and better now, certainly, than leaving it for two, three or four years to expand land banking activity—but that does not meet the immediate need of this country, and that immediate need is serviced land. The municipalities of Canada need sewage and water systems and roads now.

An hon. Member: Not tomorrow.

Mr. Hellyer: It is not good enough to buy some swamp in the outskirts of Ottawa which can be developed in years to come, as the government has done. Although we are delighted to know that the government is going to finance a building in Toronto where the sewage will be recycled and the water will be used over and over again, by the time the system has been perfected to the point that it will have commercial application and use universally on a wider scale, precious years will have gone by. I repeat, to