

Housing and Urban Renewal

devised to support an immediate decision to commit such a level of expenditure when so little is lost in this pause until a sounder basis is provided.

Having said that, however, I should note that even in this transitional stage, Mr. Speaker, there are some schemes to which all three levels of government have an identifiable commitment and which, in our view, can be accepted within the general concerns I have expressed. Over and above the six on which negotiations started in August, there are 12 such projects distributed between the eight provinces of Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

Within specific dollar amounts in each case, I am offering to the provincial ministers responsible and have authorized CMHC officials to proceed with negotiations toward at least partial implementation of these additional 12 projects. To fund the federal grant share of these and other approvals up to and including this year, federal expenditures for this program will be maintained at a level of approximately \$25 million annually for the five-year period 1970 through 1974.

Mr. Stanfield: That is a big deal.

Mr. Andras: This compares with expenditures of \$7.5 million in 1967, \$12.5 million in 1968, and \$23 million in 1969. Beyond that, further investments in urban renewal are most unlikely at least until the urban policy review is completed next year, and it is quite possible that the results of that review will indicate the need for new directions and programs of urban assistance.

For those communities with schemes in preparation but not ready or not approved, I have asked my officials to re-examine each project in order to determine whether some of the work they wish to do can be accomplished by other NHA programs—land assembly, section 16 or section 40 loans, public housing, sewage treatment loans—or whether they can be assisted by other federal departmental programs. Some municipalities have already begun to negotiate redevelopment with private sources—I understand with some reason for optimism—and others may wish to do the same, based upon the schemes prepared. Should communities wish to de-designate the areas set aside for urban renewal, we shall certainly honour our commitment to contribute to the cost of the scheme preparation completed to that date.

[Mr. Andras.]

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I wish to say that inherent in this approach I have outlined is a principle to which I subscribe, that of the need for constant program evaluation. Even the most well intentioned plan conceived can encounter unforeseen weaknesses and changing priorities and conditions when executed. Failure to undertake critical evaluation as a constant requirement so that these weaknesses are identified, or failure to adjust to the need for change, even though inconvenient and sometimes painful, leads to the waste of scarce resources and would be irresponsible.

Mr. Baldwin: There is not much enthusiasm in that statement.

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, at long last the Minister without Portfolio responsible for housing has made a statement on urban renewal. But his statement says nothing.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Alexander: It is nothing but a slap in the face for the cities.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Alexander: On the basis of the statement, I submit it is clear that the government is not giving leadership in this area. It ought to give more leadership and ought to make sure that the three levels of government confer with a view to solving the problems that beset our urban centres. What concerns me more than anything is that the cities have difficulty in gaining the ear of the government. I hope the minister will, in his sincerity, support the proposition that this party has recently stated in terms of so structuring the parliamentary committee on the constitution that we will be able to have dialogue, consultation and direction from the cities. Perhaps here we will get the answers.

Urban renewal is a fact. I am surprised the minister did not state it is not the fault of the cities that they have so obviously gotten into this mess but rather the fault of this government and its bureaucracy for entering into programs without giving them any study whatsoever.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Alexander: The former minister in charge of housing indicated, when he suddenly realized what was happening, that he had found out it would take 120 years before we