

Housing

We have one of the most efficient construction industries in Canada, certainly around our large cities, so far as the building of multiple dwellings is concerned. It was almost self-evident that modular housing would not be able to compete with this kind of efficiency. But what is of interest to me is that in terms of construction costs the service modules built around the kitchen are a very good modular approach, and I think would have a tremendous pay-off if they were put together and marketed as a modular component.

I realize other speakers wish to take part in this debate before the hour of adjournment, Madam Speaker, so may I say in conclusion that the most frustrating thing to any person who is struggling to buy a house today is the amount of politics to be found in the housing industry. Until the municipalities, provinces, and the federal government get away from the media and publicity, and seriously address themselves to how to handle the no-growth situation, along with the pressures and trends established over a long period of time toward mass movement to urban development, and until we spread employment opportunities to smaller areas, there is simply no good reason to service land in such communities.

As others have said, this is a Friday afternoon and this is an interesting way to spend it. The hon. member for Don Valley has made a great oration, but I do not see how that sort of thing is going to solve the housing problems in Canada. What we need is co-operation between the three levels of government to get this job done.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Is the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies) rising to ask a question?

Mr. Gillies: Yes, Madam Speaker. Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Milne: Certainly.

Mr. Gillies: I wonder whether the hon. member from Bramalea has talked to some major developers in the Bramalea area about what their principal problem is in building housing at the present time.

Mr. Milne: As a matter of fact, I have. I think they would indicate to the hon. member, if he asked them the same question—

Mr. Gillies: I did, yesterday.

Mr. Milne: Yes, I understand that. I think he would learn from them that the private sector is not advancing sufficient housing funds.

Mr. Gillies: That is exactly right.

Mr. Milne: Hon. members opposite are the strongest proponents of the private sector, so they should tell some of their corporate friends that if they feel any social responsibility for housing they should be making more money available.

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Madam Speaker, in the few minutes I have left I am pleased to be able to make some contribution. I commend my colleague, the hon. member for Kingston and the

[Mr. Milne.]

Islands (Miss MacDonald), for a very excellent motion and for her presentation which covered the housing crisis pretty thoroughly.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Marshall: Others of my colleagues covered the waterfront, as it were. The area I want to explore for a few moments has to do with the new veterans' housing program which is now closely aligned with the responsibilities of the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Danson) in collaboration with the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. MacDonald). This new program went into effect on May 1, and while I admit that they have struck on two programs that could fulfil the needs of many veterans, they missed a most vital and important item which would provide relief for veterans who have homes of their own but are living on fixed incomes or allowances.

First let me deal with the two sections of the act that will provide veterans with a bit of extra relief. I refer to the AHOP program whereby veterans will not have to face the restriction that they must have children to qualify, not that this is any great show of consideration when we take account of the age of the veterans to whom this measure applies. In addition, the veterans will be able to qualify for annual assistance of \$600 on the purchase of an existing home. I hope the minister will soon consider reintroducing this proposal for all Canadians, as well as removing the restriction on the first time home buyer that he must have one or more children to qualify.

In this regard, even though the Minister of Veterans Affairs—whom I was hoping would be here this afternoon—has publicized the program in the newspapers and it will soon appear in the newsletters and periodicals of the veterans' organizations, I appeal to the minister to set up better communications to make every veteran aware of the program. It is well known to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, as well as to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs, that many veterans were not aware of the deadline set by parliament in 1963 for certification under the Veterans' Land Act. As a result they were denied the opportunity of taking advantage of the act after that date. I therefore appeal to both ministers to ensure, through every avenue available to them—certainly there are sufficient public relations staff in government departments today—that every veteran is made aware of the new program.

Another observation I want to make has to do with the section under the non-profit housing provisions whereby organizations may apply for a little extra relief under the start-up funds and 10 per cent assistance on capital costs. Again I wish to remind both ministers that in the design of such buildings it is important that standards be set to ensure easy mobility of the handicapped, the disabled, and the aged. I also hope that the Minister of Veterans Affairs will provide, in consultation with the veterans' organizations across the country, leadership in the provision of non-profit housing of every type needed for all veterans.

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A most glaring oversight exists in the consideration the ministers have given to the provision of a housing program. I refer to the vital and important need of thousands