

into with the provincial governments, which, directly and indirectly, have facilitated municipal action with respect to matters now under consideration by the Senate Committee. The National Housing Act has been a boon to municipal governments, although they have not yet learned to make the fullest use of it. Particularly is this so with respect to the provisions for financial assistance for slum clearance, land assembly and urban renewal projects.

Without the National Housing Act it is doubtful whether any municipality could have carried out limited slum clearance projects. It is equally doubtful, even with such measures, whether any municipality, large or small, could hope to undertake a concerted and comprehensive program of urban renewal and development of the magnitude now required in our larger cities and towns. And it is no less doubtful whether municipal governments will be able to finance the heavy costs involved in providing water and sewer connections to new housing areas, particularly in suburban growth communities, unless some sort of facilitating financial aid is made available. They are unable to do so for several reasons, the most important of which is that their tax and finance structure conceived to meet the needs of an earlier time is now inadequate for these times.

This is the crux of the municipal problem and there is no easy or simple way to solve it.

Members of the Senate Committee may be asking themselves, why should the Federal Government concern itself with urban watermains and sewers? And, if it did, will it not have the questionable effect of creating further speculation in land value by producing "windfall" gains to landowners?

It may be a trite answer, but the fact of the matter is that the provision of watermains and trunk sewers, the "big pipes", has become the key to our housing problem from now on; and, particularly, low-cost housing. It is as much an urgent national problem as the constructing of highways in the Yukon. It certainly affects many more people as well as the continued well-being of the already developed and economically important urban growth areas of the nation. It is as much a national problem as is the need for new hospital construction to which the Federal Government has already made substantial contributions. It is the immediate and urgent bottleneck in the national housing program and until it is resolved, it will continue to frustrate the basic aims of the National Housing Act.

So far as the speculative potentials that may arise consequent upon extending water and sewer facilities to new housing areas is concerned, the answer, again, may be trite, but the fact is that it has been the very lack of such facilities that, to a very considerable extent, has already created speculation in urban land values. Being mindful of the possibility, however, it seems reasonable to expect that safeguarding measures could be instituted whereby the speculative possibilities could be reduced to their minimum and which, indirectly, could recoup for public purposes a goodly portion of the unearned income which otherwise would accrue to the landowner. Tax experts are not without ingenuity in such matters. Certainly, appropriate measures have long been needed to curb the completely unwarranted, if not vicious, land speculation which has characterized urban real estate since the end of the war.

Municipal governments would concur with most of the views put forward to the Committee by previous witnesses. It would be redundant, therefore, to elaborate at any great length on the well-informed and expert testimony which the Committee has already had from these authorities. There are one or two observations, however, which perhaps should be made.

Previous witnesses have referred to the rigidities and other problems they have come up against in connection with local building and zoning by-laws. The complaints were not spelled out in detail. Therefore it is difficult to know just what the difficulties were. But, in general, it can be said that