

*National Housing Act*

**Mr. Byrne:** Whatever changed your mind?

**Mr. Hahn:** I am pleased that you asked. The reason I changed my mind was that the last day this was discussed a number of speakers took part in the debate, such as the hon. member for Mackenzie, and raised certain problems in respect to housing for the needy and the aged particularly. Because of the policy of this particular government it was impractical for the minister to answer as to why we were unable to have the housing for which we were asking. That caused me to rise again today to see whether we could not at this time at least try to excuse the government for its inactivity in this particular field.

I do not intend to repeat any of my arguments—it is not necessary in such a broad field—but the last day I drew to the minister's attention certain difficulties that people in the Vancouver area had experienced in respect to finding housing that would make it unnecessary for them to do things that we as a society should not condone. At that time I referred to certain articles in the *Vancouver Province* to show their plight. I did not enlarge on it in any shape or form because I felt it was unnecessary to do so, and it is not my intention to do so now.

However, certain hon. members, such as the hon. member for Vancouver South, indicated that it was the responsibility of provinces and societies and certain of the individuals in the city of Vancouver and other areas to bring about the means of financing housing for the senior citizens and those who are in need. I was rather surprised to hear that, because I am satisfied that the old age pensioners of the city of Vancouver and the citizens of Vancouver would not agree with him that they had the means in that city to go ahead and use the facilities under the present act.

We have accepted a responsibility in British Columbia to our senior citizens and assist financially the people of that province more than any other province, because we have a greater number of aged citizens per capita in that province than any other province in Canada. Certainly the city of Vancouver, the district of Surrey Delta and the whole of the lower mainland, including New Westminster and the city of Victoria, have far more senior citizens per capita than has any other part of Canada, and for that reason the problem is accentuated in that particular area.

Let us stop to consider that our province is paying more to help those people than is any other province. I am speaking of the needy, those who get \$40 a month only and are not earning over and above that, those who are

[Mr. Hahn.]

actually in need of this housing more than anyone else. That province is therefore not in a financial position to go ahead and assist in the particular building envisaged in the act as it now stands.

Possibly there may be some members in the house who would suggest that the province should not necessarily assist them in this way but, the cost of living being what it is today, this is merely a cost of living bonus. Hon. members who live in British Columbia know that, and I am satisfied that this applies to every area of Canada. They must realize there is not sufficient money left, out of the paltry pension cheques these people get, to house them. There are those who have suggested—as I believe the hon. member for Hamilton South did—that the municipal districts are shirking their responsibilities.

In introducing this legislation the minister, as recorded on page 3168 of *Hansard* of April 23, had this to say:

Under the proposed legislation the federal government will be authorized to contribute to a municipality half of the total cost of acquiring and clearing the area, through contributions made during the process of the acquisition and clearing.

That is the smallest portion of the cost. All the other utilities and all the other factors that a municipal district must look at are the major portion of the cost to the municipality. In regard to this matter of acquiring property, frequently the municipality has the property already and does not have to acquire it. The clearing of brush and so on in those areas is a nominal factor; it is not the expensive one. The fact remains that the cost of utilities and of providing the services required in an area such as that is the expensive item, and must be kept in mind as such. For that reason I maintain, as I did the other day, that this act does not go far enough. Basically the fact that we expect municipal districts to step in and pay their share sounds fine, but it is not the answer to the question.

The hon. member for Mackenzie drew to our attention a certain housing plan. I think Schacht was the name of the man who introduced the financing of the scheme in Germany, to which the hon. member for Vancouver South took exception. He did not tell us how this was financed. The whole thing is integrated. If we are going to carry on in this fashion and suggest that we require more housing, we must find the means of financing.

The minister has my sympathy in that respect. I know he is trying to do his level best to give everybody in this country a house. I think I indicated as much the other day when I said that 623,000 was not the true number of people in this country who actually