

housing should be sufficient to warn the people of Canada directly away from it.

I have had the privilege of living in government married quarters for several years of my married life. The occupants of married quarters are never very happy. Married quarters are government quarters: they are government built and government regulated. You must not have a hedge within 27 feet or something of the walls of the house. You are not allowed to plant a vine that will crawl up the front part of the building. I am sure that anyone who drives through a town that has a military component can spot the married quarters because they are ugly. They are clean, but ugly. Unfortunately, this frequently carries through to the part of the economy where we try to give the poor or the elderly citizens of the community low cost accommodation. We have an example in Victoria—I am sure every city has similar examples—in the part of town where you never say to your guests, “We must drive through such and such a development so you can see the beautiful buildings”.

I implore the minister, if he introduces some of these experimental urban demonstrations, to keep an eye on visual environment. Visual pollution is as bad as any other kind of pollution. We have one high-rise, limited dividend building in Victoria that is an eyesore to the entire city. The only people happy about it are those who live in it, because they cannot see it. I must admit that the building is well designed inside and most of the people living there are happy with it, but they do not like the appearance of the building—and you cannot do much with a solid cement building, 21 storeys high, that has been designed ugly and constructed ugly. In this particular case the surrounding area is equally ugly and nothing is ever done about it.

Of interest in this idea of low cost housing to help a certain sector is the Pruitt-Igoe development in St. Louis, Missouri. They started to clear a district in St. Louis in order to build low rent accommodation. This was an apartment complex. I should like to tell the House what the *New York Times* said about it. The structure was built in 1954 with \$36 million of United States federal funds. It was not a balanced community. There were no shops; it was strictly accommodation and it was thought that the low rent aspect would make it a success. But it was so bad that they have knocked down 43 of the buildings in this apartment complex.

This signalled the start of a \$3 million plan for renovation of the complex to make it liveable again. This massive, mostly vacant project, was built in 1954 and is now to be transformed into a balanced community of smaller apartment buildings, townhouses, commercial buildings, light industrial plants and two parks. Secretary Romney rejected St. Louis' officials' pleas to raze and rebuild the entire project, fearing a chain reaction in other cities with similar complexes and problems of decay, crime, poverty, and filth.

The moral of this story is that poverty and slums cannot be cured by the creation of huge ghettos for the poor. Segregating the poor only exacerbates the problem. Instead, they must be absorbed without stigma into a viable community. The ponderous projects so beloved by bureaucracies lead only to worse degradation for the underprivileged.

Urban Affairs

Mr. Speaker: Order. It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock this evening.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

Mr. Heward Grafftey (Brome-Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, it seems that I have obtained the floor by some kind of default.

An hon. Member: Don't knock it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: Make this your finest hour.

Mr. Grafftey: We might ask ourselves briefly this evening, at this point of the debate, exactly what is the subject with which we are dealing. It seems to me we are talking about decent housing for Canadians. Surely at this time in our national life, no matter what a person's income, his right to decent housing is a basic right, just as is his right to clothing, food and humane and decent medical and health services. As a matter of fact, it has always been my view that in discussing housing we are discussing the very health of our nation. It has been said long before I say it in the House tonight, that the state of a nation's civilization can be judged to a great extent by the way it houses its people.

We often boast in Canada that we have the second or third highest material, economic standard of living in the world. This might be true, but it is of very little significance in respect of the 500,000 Canadian homes which by any standard must be deemed as substandard. It is of little comfort to the 500,000 Canadian families who by any international or national measure are living this very night in substandard housing.

In the province I have the honour to come from—Quebec—a constituency of which I represent in this House, it is deemed that one third of the houses occupied by families in the province are by any definition whatsoever substandard. It is very nice for us to play with statistics and to go around boasting that we have the second or third highest economic standard of living in the world, but I do not think we should be terribly proud of the facts I have cited.

What is the situation today? The minister can boast month in and month out about the fine job this government is doing in the housing field, but in cities such as Toronto and Vancouver only 5 per cent of the people can afford to buy houses today. Does this say much for the humaneness of government policies in the housing field?

● (2010)

I have the honour to represent a largely rural riding in this House of Commons. We have been promised by one minister of state for urban affairs after another that something will be done about the situation. No matter where they sit in this House of Commons, I am sure members of