

Supply—Labour

corporations or agencies. They had not done so previously. They have organized now to co-operate in programs to provide housing for low income families and the elderly. Since the passing of the revisions in 1964, agencies have been or are being formed in eight out of the ten provinces. The same 1964 amendments opened new opportunities for provincial action in the field of public housing as an alternative, at their option, to joint federal-provincial participation. They offer the provinces long-term low interest loans equal to 90 per cent of the cost of the project. Our low rental homes program has enjoyed marked success as witnessed by the fact that in one province at least 90 per cent of the money they invest is being put up by the federal government. In other cases 75 per cent of the funds is put up by the federal government.

• (3:30 p.m.)

As a result of this 1964 legislation—and I think these figures are interesting—16,000 public housing units have been placed under the federal-provincial arrangements and under the 90 per cent loan-assisted program. That is 16,000 units in a little over 30 months, as against 11,700 units in the previous 15 years. It is encouraging that we are making progress at this time and bringing the provinces and municipalities actively into the picture, but it has taken enabling legislation to do so.

In addition to the substantial support being given to the public housing programs, I am anxious to expand substantially the activities of limited dividend housing corporations which were active for the first year or two but which seem to have been quietly forgotten in recent years.

During my visit earlier this year to the ten provinces I emphasized that limited dividend housing corporations can effectively provide, with federal or provincial funds, housing for low income families as well as for elderly persons. I have encouraged the provinces, municipalities and charitable organizations to move into this field. I have also undertaken—and this will be implemented promptly—to make the adjustments in rent levels which are permitted, and as well and perhaps more importantly, in the maximum income qualification. This is because a person cannot get a house financed by a limited dividend corporation if he has an income in excess of \$5,000. The provinces, after getting advice from the municipalities if they wish to do so, may recommend the rent level that they think appropriate in a particular case.

[Mr. Nicholson.]

We all know, Mr. Chairman, that there is no easy answer to the complex problem of housing production and to the allied problems that arise from urban renewal and development. This is particularly true in the metropolitan cities of Canada. I refer not just to Toronto or Montreal or Vancouver or Winnipeg but to cities ranging down in size to the city of Hamilton.

Mr. Chairman, the availability of mortgage funds, while it is a very important factor, is only one factor. Even if we had the market for double the quantity of housing next year as well as the ability to build that number—say 300,000—it would require ancillary services far beyond the capacity of our provinces and municipalities to provide, certainly beyond the capacity of the municipalities.

Yes, Mr. Chairman, there are many problems affecting the production of housing that can be resolved only by local or provincial initiative, including the supply of land, zoning, urban planning and building by-laws.

While there is absolutely no question, as I have readily conceded at the outset, that housing is a matter of grave national concern, I must say that in view of our rapidly expanding population the problem is bound to be with us indefinitely in those areas where growth takes place. For example, Toronto; when I first visited Toronto at the end of the first war it had a population of about 600,000 but it is now nearly four times that size and nearly one-third of its population has come from other countries.

The Chairman: Order. I must interrupt the minister to advise him that the time allotted to him has expired.

Some hon. Members: Carry on.

The Chairman: Does the committee give unanimous consent to allow the minister to continue?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Nicholson: I thank hon. members for their co-operation. I will not be much longer because I know hon. gentlemen wish to make their contribution and they may have a few questions to ask.

As I way saying, Mr. Chairman, Toronto is perhaps the best example in Canada of situations such as this, partly because of the unusually high percentage of new Canadians who have moved to that city within a relatively short period of time. This situation