

Adjournment Debate

McLaren-Richards' report, the service report of the regional municipality, indicates that the prime area for serviced development is the township of Nepean and the township of Goulburn where there has already been a great investment of federal public funds in sewer and water services. More important than that, there is a real housing need today, not five years, not ten years, not 20 years from now but today in this area.

This great land assembly, some 5,000 acres projected over a period of 20 or 25 years, is not going to solve the problems that come to my desk each day as a Member of Parliament with respect to the crowding of existing urban areas, on the one hand, and the availability of relatively inexpensive serviced land, on the other.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister to reconsider the investment of public funds in this area in that premature way and to invest those funds in the area which is now serviced with the assistance of federal funds, the townships of Nepean and Goulburn in the west end of the national capital area.

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) with great interest. I know he takes an interest in this area, as do I, and in the three minutes that I have I should like to make a few points.

The location of this land assembly and land banking proposal is in the line with a planning study commissioned by the Ottawa-Carleton district. The area for land assembly was identified as a potential growth area in the Ottawa-Carleton district, hence the location of this land assembly. That report indicated that it was estimated that 118,000 dwelling units, or some 6,000 units per year, would be needed over the next 25 years to accommodate growth in the national capital region. The planning proposals which have yet to be approved by the Ottawa-Carleton council suggested that provision be made for a future population of 650,000 within the green belt and 350,000 beyond the green belt. Of the latter, about 275,000 would be located in satellite communities.

I quote these figures to point out that while there is land assembly going on in the southeast area that the hon. member refers to, it is not going to prevent other com-

munities in the national capital region and other growth centres from developing and other subdivisions from being approved and other townships from growing, which seems to be a fear. These are long-term planning proposals for the national capital region, the kind of long-term planning that we need in every region in the country. We support that kind of long-term planning proposal, hence our involvement in it. In this way we are endeavouring to have planned an orderly growth within the national capital region. I would hope that the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton is not opposed to that kind of long-term planning.

We are trying to avoid urban sprawl within the national capital region and avoid the use of valuable land in the region. If the hon. member and the reeves for whom he may purport to speak really oppose this kind of long-term planning, I would hope that he and they would urge immediately a permanent, long-term freeze on land within this area used for land assembly and land banking and say that that land must permanently remain frozen in its present use. At present it is mostly scrubland. The reeve out there called it swampland. The hon. member might urge that it be permanently frozen so as to remain that kind of land, because then we would get on with other long-term planning proposals in other regions instead of wasting money in the region on which the hon. member seems to think we ought not to spend money. With respect to consultation, may I say that there has been consultation and information has been obtained from throughout the region. This has involved our technical staff, the Ontario Housing Corporation, CMHC and the National Capital Commission. Questions of transportation, of servicing water systems, of engineering studies and water tables have all been taken into account.

I agree with the hon. member that there is a housing problem today and a need for housing. Hence we have introduced, for example, legislation before this House, which I hope will be debated quickly, to deal with some of our immediate problems. We also think there is a need for long-term planning, and that is what is involved in this matter.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.30 p.m.