

Housing

Later the article goes on to say:

Builders have seen their industry go sharply downhill between 1976 and 1980. Housing starts reached a record 273,203 units in 1976 but were down to a mere 158,601 units in 1980.

A further paragraph in the article reads as follows:

For 1982, the corporation predicts starts on single-detached houses will drop to 83,000 and starts on apartments, duplexes and row houses are likely to be down to 79,000 units.

That article reminds me of a line from one of John Lennon's songs—"I heard the news today. Oh boy!" We have heard the news today and it is bad!

The views on housing reflected in that news report are of interest to the constituents of Vancouver-Kingsway, Mr. Speaker. I want to try to do something a little different today. Rather than giving general views I want to devote a good part of my remarks to quoting the exact words of people in my riding. Vancouver-Kingsway is in the southeast part of the city of Vancouver. It comprises mainly single dwellings occupied by working people, many of whom are new Canadians and others who have been in the area for generations. It is a stable area of hard working, good people.

I received hundreds of replies to a questionnaire which I included with a householder and some of them are quite detailed. I should like to take this opportunity to show the minister the pattern that emerges from these replies. The first is from a woman on St. Margarets Street. This is a fairly typical street in the riding. She writes:

Starting Dec. 1st, 1981, we had to change homes. Two small bedrooms for 2 adult and 3 children was just too much. We now are renting 3 bedroom main floor of duplex for \$675 per month. We can just scrape this payment per month. My husband and myself both work, to try and get our own home. With this monthly rent, plus high down payments, and mortgage rates out of sight, it is just impossible. It is very discouraging. We are both in our late twenties, with three small children. We have never collected unemployment, welfare or been in trouble with the law. We were raised to be good Canadian citizens. I wish there was something to give us a little hope.

Another constituent replied:

We rent because we cannot afford to buy; we can just afford the rent. I was born in Vancouver and it makes me very angry that I am being forced out of my own city by real estate people and land owners.

Another one writes:

As a single working parent the fall out of the interest rates has a dramatic effect on myself from \$375 per month to \$525 is unbelievable.

I asked people about their increase in rent or mortgage payments in their case and this woman writes that her increase in rent is \$150 per month.

● (1720)

Another woman replied:

With nowhere to move, I face the choice of giving up my child or moving into the Parliament Buildings which are usually vacant.

Another person said:

I believe everyone should have a right to his own house but feel the answer is in more rental accommodation. The government should make available housing for rent at a realistic rate. This would give tenants a chance to save for a house of their own. When they move out it would be available for someone else to do the

same. Also speculators, etc. who are asking exorbitant rents to cover their mortgage payments would have to reduce rents to compete. (New Canadian)

I just want to pause here. I see the minister across the way. I should like to refer to what he said about housing which was quoted by the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mrs. Mitchell) when she spoke on the matter of housing on this bill the other night. He said that, "Governments do not build houses and that the dynamic force which has made Canadians among the best house people in the world have been the private construction industry and financial institutions." This is a myth. In fact the government agency, CMHC, has been responsible, either directly or indirectly, for the construction of over 50 per cent of the housing stock produced in the country since 1945. When that new Canadian in my riding writes and says that the government should make available some housing, there is some foundation for it. I will write back and say, "Do not believe the myth which the minister is perpetuating".

I can remember coming to Canada as a new Canadian from Scotland in 1947. We moved into a house which I hesitate to say was in Toronto. We had CMHC funding for my parents to get started in a starter home. The minister should not perpetuate the myth that his friends, free enterprise, built everything. There was much assistance from CMHC, and we want this assistance to continue.

Mr. Cosgrove: Why are you holding up 30,000 units by speaking on the bill?

Mr. Waddell: I am not holding up 30,000 homes.

Mr. Cosgrove: You are.

Mr. Waddell: The bill will be through tonight or tomorrow. If the minister will listen to my remarks, he will know all about the housing situation.

Mr. Cosgrove: I heard those remarks in July last year.

Mr. Waddell: If the minister will not listen to the people of Vancouver-Kingsway, there is not much we can do.

Mr. Cosgrove: I listened to them last year.

Mr. Waddell: The minister is not listening; he is shouting at me. He should listen to what the people have to say. The Liberal philosophy is to do nothing in halves which can be done in quarters, which is what the bill does. I will make some concrete suggestions for the minister, to which he should listen, but let me return to the replies of the people of Vancouver. Another woman wrote:

Although my husband and I are not affected by the current situation—we have our house paid for—nevertheless we are still very concerned for all the people who are being hurt by this shameful situation. We think the government should do something quickly to correct things and create more affordable housing.

Another man wrote:

We cannot afford to buy what we will eat if we try to pay this present high mortgage rate.

In the questionnaire I asked:

By how much did your monthly payments increase?