

Request for Housing Statement

made on the project this year. This is trying the patience of those people too much. It shows a complete and utter disregard for their feelings.

• (4:20 p.m.)

Canadians have been suffering too long from the shortage of suitable homes for the people in the low and middle income brackets. The solutions to these two problems should be fundamentally different. The first problem is essentially that of poverty, and the second is the inability of the market system to function. This problem prevails not only in my province, but right across Canada. A large number of Canadians are desperately in need of homes who are not earning salaries that qualify them for a National Housing Act mortgage. I understand that a person must be earning \$8,000 or more a year to qualify for such a mortgage. In a large number of areas in Canada, including Newfoundland, that regulation eliminates approximately 90 per cent of the people wishing to buy or build a new home.

The government should encourage municipalities to avail themselves of the limited dividend section of the National Housing Act. They should be encouraged to build co-operative housing. This also applies to the building societies, as mentioned this morning by my colleague, the hon. member for Hamilton West. The municipalities should be encouraged to become involved in housing on a much larger scale with, of course, financial assistance from the government. A large number of communities could take advantage of section 16 of the National Housing Act, dealing with the limited dividend aspect. The federal government should encourage the municipalities in order that decent low cost homes will be available.

Public housing is a must in most urban areas of Canada. In the city of St. John's, Newfoundland, we have far too few public housing units. As my colleague pointed out, there are waiting lists of 400 to 1,000 people in this city with a population of less than 100,000 people. We should give serious consideration to providing more low cost public housing. A new concept should be adopted with regard to public housing, with funds being made available to the middle income group so that they could build small homes on land developed by the municipality with the co-operation of the federal government. This land would be given to the people on a lease basis. This would enable them to acquire title to a piece of land on a lease back

[Mr. Carter.]

basis with a very small down payment. With CMHC financing, they could erect a home suitable for themselves and their families. This avenue should be explored by the minister in charge of housing and the government in conjunction with the provincial governments and municipalities. The middle income people would derive great benefits. In some respects this could also assist the low income group.

I understand that 100,000 families in Canada are on waiting lists for public housing. The minister's statement this afternoon will be of little consolation to those people desperately in need of better accommodation. The government is sadly lacking in its approach to housing. The number of starts made this year is far below that projected a year ago. It is a sad commentary in this day and age, when we are putting men on the moon and satellites in the sky, that a large number of Canadians in all parts of this country, especially in the economically depressed areas, do not even have proper toilet facilities. It is a sad commentary on the policies of this government. As was pointed out by the hon. member for St. John's East, every effort should be made to bring forth a bold new approach to the problem of housing in Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Rondeau: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I wish to point out that we do not have a quorum and therefore I would ask you to count the members.

[English]

Mr. McGrath: That reflects the attitude of the government to this whole problem.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Badanai): Order. I shall instruct the clerk to count the members in the House.

On the count being made, 20 members were declared to be present.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Badanai): There is a quorum.

Mr. Carter: I wish to impress upon this House, the government and the minister responsible, the need for immediate assistance to those people on the bottom half of the income ladder in Canada. I think the minister would be well advised to read the statements