

National Housing Act

city would receive assistance amounting to \$850,000. I maintain that the city then should take action and expropriate property so as to provide parking for our federal government building in Hamilton under the provisions of this act. It may cost us another \$200,000 to provide this parking, but with the federal government sharing 50-50 in the cost the city's share would then be \$100,000. The end result would be that the corporation would have assistance, say, amounting to \$850,000. They in turn would lay out \$100,000, and we would have parking facilities for both these projects.

However, the most important problem to my mind still remains. After this land is cleared for whatever use it may be put to, the problem remains of relocating those who will be obliged to find other accommodation. Reference was made this afternoon by the hon. member for Regina City and, I think, the hon. member for Eglinton to a brief from Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation to the royal commission on Canada's economic prospects. To my mind the points in this brief are so important and they outline the situation so well that I feel they should be put on the record, if that has not been done already. I read from page 32 of this document, which I think has been placed on the desk of all hon. members. It says:

Most of the housing which is ripe for withdrawal is adjacent to the commercial and industrial hearts of cities. It includes a good part of the 100,000 houses now in need of major repair in the larger urban centres. It also includes houses in adequate condition which may have to be destroyed in the process of redeveloping blighted neighbourhoods. All these houses lie in a transitional belt of mixed land uses where small businesses and industries have invaded residential blocks. The land has taken its value from its potential use for commercial purposes. The cost of acquiring blocks of blighted land in Montreal and Toronto may well exceed \$250,000 an acre, this price representing the value of land and existing buildings together with payments for the disturbance of businesses. In such areas there are, of course, already streets and services some of which can be incorporated in subsequent redevelopment. In considering the re-use of the site for housing purposes the acquisition cost of \$250,000 an acre may be compared with the present costs of serviced land in suburban areas, about \$2,000 an acre for raw land and \$8,000 for serviced . . .

The objective of such redevelopment is both to eliminate substandard housing and to improve the housing circumstances of those living in such areas.

I maintain to those hon. members who have questioned the policy of the government with respect to housing that this is the policy of the government, to eliminate substandard

[Mr. Reinke.]

housing and to improve the housing circumstances of those living in such areas.

The act of clearance by public agencies brings with it an obligation to secure suitable accommodation for those who are displaced.

I am referring particularly to this problem which I mentioned earlier.

Some displaced households may be able and willing to find their own accommodation. But it must be assumed that the majority will have to be rehoused by a public agency, either on the site or elsewhere, in new housing provided for this purpose. And—

This is important.

—since the majority of households in blighted areas cannot meet the costs of new housing, public action is required to build and operate and pay subsidies on new accommodation . . .

To what extent should central blighted areas be redeveloped to house low-income families?

It goes on to point out the various factors.

Whatever may be the answers to these questions there remains the obligation to rehouse the present residents of blighted areas to be cleared. They must be rehoused in a manner and in a location that will make them effective contributors to the economy and life of the community and this must be done at the least possible cost to the taxpayers. Perhaps these aims may best be achieved by relocating some families on suburban sites and by releasing some central sites for other purposes.

I maintain that our most crying need today is for low-rental housing. I have discussed this very important matter with members of the board of control in my own city. They can provide a few more homes in the already existing project for 500 rental homes that we have in Roxborough Park, but this is not sufficient.

The brief from the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation goes on further and expresses the needs for low-rental housing, referred to today by the hon. member for Regina City. I shall not read all of it, but it says:

Estimates of the need for low-rental housing depend upon the criteria that are used. The greater part of the doubling-up occurs amongst low-income families and most of the dwellings in need of major repair and lacking essential sanitary facilities are occupied by low-income families.

The need to satisfy the housing requirements of old people has begun to appear as a new problem arising from the greatly increasing proportion of elderly people in the population. With increasing age and reduced earning power many people either do not wish to maintain their family home or are unable to do so. They are not in a position to undertake mortgage payments on smaller dwellings and with increasing infirmity they require more services and special arrangements.

But here is the important point in this report, as I see it:

Action taken to provide housing for low-income families and for old people will depend upon the climate of public opinion. Public funds cannot be used to build low-rental housing and to subsidize rents unless the public believes there is a condition that needs correcting. Furthermore,