

National Housing Act

I presume this change was made as a result of consultation with the provinces and other bodies concerned with housing. However, I agree with the task force of metro Toronto that the level of funding will be insufficient for the purpose which must be accomplished. I urge an early review and evaluation of the effectiveness of the program. Along with the task force, I suggest that the amount of a loan for rehabilitation which can be made should be increased from \$2,000 to \$4,000 for low-income families.

I also commend to the minister the view of the task force that to achieve residential rehabilitation, traditional contracting arrangements are inappropriate. I join in their recommendations that funding be provided for the development of neighbourhood work groups which can work on a salaried basis. I also strongly urge upon the minister the recommendation that landlords benefiting from the grants and loans program be subject to rent restraint agreements for a stated minimum period of time.

I hope that the neighbourhood improvement program will be applicable in certain situations where the property is beyond designated areas. It has been suggested that the very fact of the designation tends to cast a blot on the area so designated. I also call to the minister's attention the recommendation in the task force report that there be provision for grants and loans for conversion of larger residences for multiple use. Conversions frequently represent the most economical use of larger buildings; therefore, this is an oversight in the legislation which should be remedied.

I would also call attention to the brief of the Co-operative Housing Foundation of Ottawa, and the Ontario Habitat Foundation with its headquarters in Toronto to which the minister has already referred. I must in fairness repeat what the minister has said, that the experienced authors of that submission believe the bill to be an enormous advance over the present National Housing Act provisions so far as they affect co-operatives. I agree with that. Nevertheless, let me remind the minister that the brief proposes further amendments and I support the amendments they propose.

Dealing with rehabilitation, the brief says that the rehabilitation program will be of significant assistance in many Canadian municipalities. It goes on to urge that two shortcomings should be overcome. The first is that the program should be extended to include rehabilitation which provides housing for single persons. Secondly, the program should provide explicitly, as I have mentioned already, for the conversion of larger houses to a number of smaller dwelling units. I hope the minister will introduce amendments to this effect.

I now turn to the question of co-operative housing. As the co-operative housing brief puts it, the co-operative process would do more than simply provide housing. It would, as well, strengthen the participatory fabric of our urban centres. The legislation, subject to certain amendments and improvements, would put co-operatives and many other non-profit organizations into a position where they could provide significant amounts of housing to Canadian families and individuals. To put the matter in the language of the metro task force submission to which I have already referred, an important new direction in housing policy in the present legislation is the encourage-

ment of non-profit and co-operative housing associations. This thrust should be welcomed because the non-profit sector can make a significant contribution to easing the housing situation for many individuals and families.

Co-operative housing provides a form of participation and management that has been proven to be most productive in motivating people to plan for and participate in programs and services. The wording of the act must be carefully reviewed to ensure that non-profit co-operatives or par value co-operatives will be eligible for non-profit funding. Those who have followed housing policies in other countries will know the enormous contribution made to housing and indeed to the whole social fabric by co-operative housing. It is high time Canada sought to catch up with other developed and civilized countries in this field. The housing co-operatives must, therefore, expand and multiply and the legislation should be clear that it includes so-called par value continuing housing co-operatives.

As stated in the Ontario Habitat Foundation brief, par value co-operatives are an extremely important vehicle for meeting the housing needs of a broad spectrum of low and moderate-income families and individuals. This housing stock provides the only housing accommodation for families which is not operated for private profit or whose cost is not built up by successive changes in occupancy. Over the long term this could have a significant impact upon Canadian housing. The provisions of the present act provide that a non-profit corporation must be constituted exclusively for charitable purposes. I say to the minister that, surely, as a lawyer he knows the extreme difficulties in respect of what are charitable purposes. I suggest that provision should be changed in order to ensure that all non-profit co-operatives are included in the definition.

Mr. Basford: I made that clear in my speech.

Mr. Brewin: Then I missed it. I am glad to hear this. We welcome, as do others interested in this field, the provision of start-up grants to enable non-profit organizations to undertake preliminary development work on a project. Many groups which have not had access to such funds are being severely handicapped. There should be express provision in the legislation for the subsidization of residents of non-profit and co-operative housing. This, of course, would expand the area in which co-operatives could serve the housing needs of the people of Canada.

I would now like to refer to a housing development in my own constituency which can benefit from the proposed legislation and which illustrates the value of individual and co-operative enterprise. I do not wish to sound as if I were speaking in the debate on the Speech from the Throne, but what I am saying is relevant to this subject. My constituency of Greenwood corresponds roughly to ward 9 in the city of Toronto. It is a residential area with beautiful, tree-lined streets providing a fine setting for a variety of homes. There is a real diversity of incomes, rentals, age groups and family size.

The people in my constituency have shown an initiative in developing local organizations to meet their needs. They have formed an organization called ForWard 9 Citizens' Association. They publish a ward 9 community news sheet. They established a waterfront task force which

[Mr. Brewin.]