

*National Development Policy*

**Mr. Garland:** Is it correct, then, that \$40 million was used out of this figure of \$350 million?

**Mr. Green:** Yes. That amounts to something around \$40 million already used of the \$350 million voted by this house in May.

We have tried, as a result of the debate which took place in this house when we were getting this additional money, to make the new residual loans available to a far greater extent in the smaller centres. With that objective in mind officials of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation have written to the mayor or the reeve of every centre of over 1,500 people in this country pointing out that this plan is available for the Canadians who live in those smaller centres, forwarding leaflets to them and offering to have officials visit those centres to speak to meetings or to advise city or town councils and render whatever assistance is possible. This, I believe, is having the desired effect, and it now looks as though we will be doing a great deal more lending in the small centres across the country.

In addition, steps have been taken to popularize the smaller home. Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation participated in the construction of two sample cheaper homes, and we are hoping that there will be a move towards the building of such homes which will bring the benefit of our housing policy within the reach of a group of Canadians with much smaller incomes than those receiving loans at the present time.

**Mr. Garland:** Would the minister permit a question on this point. Is it the intention that these lower cost or lower quality homes will be made available throughout the country or only in rural areas?

**Mr. Green:** We are hoping they will be adopted in all parts of Canada, in the smaller centres as well as in the rural areas.

**Mr. Garland:** The minister will recognize that they will not always be acceptable.

**Mr. Green:** If they are not acceptable we cannot do much about it.

**Mr. Garland:** In many of the urban areas they will not meet the required standards.

**Mr. Green:** If they are not acceptable what we can do is very limited.

Another very encouraging sign is that in the Atlantic provinces there has been a great increase in the number of requests for loans. We were worried last year because these small home loans were not being taken up in the Atlantic provinces in as large proportions as in other parts of Canada. In the first 25 weeks of 1958, 880 applications for loans of all kinds were received from the Atlantic provinces, in which the National

Housing Act was involved, as compared with 357 applications last year. This is an increase of 146.5 per cent, and we are very much encouraged by this improvement.

Housing starts have shot up. You know, you would not think there was any recession within 10,000 miles of Canada when you consider the housing picture. Housing starts in urban centres during the first half of 1958 were 66 per cent higher than in the corresponding period in 1957. A similar increase is estimated for the rural areas and the prospect for the year as a whole is for starts in excess of 140,000 units.

We were worried as to whether these small homes would sell, and whether as a result of this policy we might find a lot of homes would be unsold across the country. Sales have been good despite a higher level of completions this year, and the inventory of unoccupied houses has declined. At the end of May there were 2,144 dwellings unoccupied for one month or more. A year ago in that category there were 2,662 dwellings.

This all goes to show that the policies of this government have been wise and that the country is not enveloped in a great black cloud as one would gather from listening to the speeches of the Leader of the Opposition and some of his colleagues across the way.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** Look at the level of unemployment and you will see.

**Mr. Green:** Oh, I know the hon. member takes a great deal of pleasure from that.

**Mr. Pearson:** The minister takes a great deal of pleasure from ignoring it.

**Mr. Green:** The Canadian construction association, which is a non-partisan organization and a splendid one, has this to say:

1957 was a difficult year for the housebuilding section of the construction industry and demonstrated the very considerable way in which the level of residential construction is dependent upon government policy. Had it not been for the timely and vigorous approach to the problem of a shortage of private mortgage funds by the government in August, it is apparent that the volume of house building and employment would have been much lower during the fall and winter months. Like most years, 1957 was affected by a number of conflicting influences in the housing field; some good and some bad. On balance, the favourable factors had won out by the end of the year. Completions rose to over 117,000 compared with a predicted total of 100,000, and the large number of housing starts in the second half of the year and a predicted decrease in competing demands for investment funds gave promise of an increased housing program in 1958.

I forgot to mention that the ordinary loans under the National Housing Act have also been greatly increased this year. Ordinary