

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 15, 1985

The House met at 2 p.m.

● (1405)

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 21

[English]

CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

SOCIAL HOUSING IN ST. JOHN'S, NFLD.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to the attention of the House the situation in the Province of Newfoundland with respect to the reductions which have been made by the Minister responsible for CMHC in social housing and special housing in that province.

Yesterday I received a copy of correspondence which was sent to the Minister from the Community Housing and Support Services Council of St. John's, from the Executive Director, Mrs. Penny Rowe. Mrs. Rowe pointed out that the reduction in social housing units in St. John's this year has reached the 67 per cent mark. She further pointed out to the Minister that there has been absolutely no allocation this year in the Province of Newfoundland for special purposes housing.

One has to recognize that while the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) only a few days ago was celebrating the fact that unemployment had gone down in Canada, in the Province of Newfoundland unemployment went up by 2.3 per cent. In the city of St. John's, and indeed, in the entire Province of Newfoundland, there are many applications before CMHC to provide housing for battered women, children with special needs, and nursing facilities. Because the special funding is totally absent this year, the start-up funds will not be available to allow applications to proceed for those very worth-while and necessary projects.

The people of Newfoundland are extremely upset—

Mr. Speaker: I regret to advise the Hon. Member that his time has expired.

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HOUSING

REDEVELOPMENT OF RAILWAY LANDS IN TORONTO

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, for years the people of Toronto have been trying to find or create affordable

housing against a vacancy rate of less than 1 per cent and run-away inflation of land prices.

Some years ago Toronto City Council began to plan a redevelopment of the huge railway yards near the waterfront; office towers near Yonge Street, and housing at the other end of the city, east and west of Spadina. All types of housing were planned, including rental, privately and individually owned, co-op, non-profit, singles housing, family units, assisted and market housing. The planning also included schools, community centres, work-places, and parks.

Now a bunch of tycoons are trying to destroy those plans. Canadian National, Imperial Oil, the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Coca Cola, Hiram Walker, McDonald's, Labatt's, and Olympia-York are using the Dome Stadium as bait. They are using free railway land, and mainly taxpayers' money. Through Canadian National, the Metro Council, and the Ontario provincial Government, they plan to redevelop the whole 75 acres as commercial land. That will wipe out the possibility of housing. It will also restart the Spadina Expressway from the south, which will destroy established residential neighbourhoods from Queen Street to Eglinton Avenue.

I call on the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) to halt this give-away of public land by the CN for the purpose of private profit, and to ensure that the public land is used for housing, recreation, and the needs of ordinary Canadians.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

U.S.S.R.—PLIGHT OF ANATOLY SHCHARANSKY

Mr. Bill Attewell (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, today approximately 70 members from the Beth Tikvah Synagogue of Willowdale, Ontario, tried to contact the Ambassador of the U.S.S.R. to Canada, to discuss the extraordinary case of Anatoly Shcharansky. Avitali Shcharansky, his wife, was also present.

Mr. Shcharansky epitomizes the struggle of Soviet Jewry and the pain and anguish of refuseniks. The Shcharanskys' marriage was only 12 hours old when Avitali was given a visa and told to leave Russia. Mr. Shcharansky was arrested on March 15, 1977, and held incommunicado for 16 months. He was tried in 1978 and sentenced to 13 years.

What was his crime? Mr. Shcharansky simply chose to help organize a group of people who wanted to ensure that Russia abided by the Helsinki Accords which were signed in 1975.

The world was once again vividly reminded of Mr. Shcharansky's plight when he endured a four-month hunger