

Suggested Lack of Urban Policy

which share the capital created through the pension plans, to give up more of these funds for the purpose? This is why we ought to look closely into the increased utilization of building societies.

I have respect for the Minister without housing—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Alexander: Yes, the minister without housing. I meant to say, the Minister without Portfolio.

Mr. Orlikow: You were right the first time.

Mr. Alexander: The minister knows I respect what he is doing but that I do not like the way in which he is going about it. He must realize by now that he will not get 200,000 starts this year. He won't make it. Those who possess much more expertise than I do on this subject say he cannot do so. Then again, he really needs not 200,000 starts but 250,000. I respectfully say to the minister: Quit pussyfooting around and get to the issues. As we talk about housing, the cities are becoming more and more frustrated. Housing is an essential part of urban renewal. When the mayors say they want urban renewal now, they mean it. It is they who, in the long run, will determine through their efforts what Canada is to become.

• (4:20 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but he may continue beyond his allotted time with the unanimous consent of the House.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Alexander: I thank hon. members; I shall not be much longer. In conclusion, Canada is a vast and empty nation where almost three-quarters of the people live in an area less than one-hundredth of the country's total land area. We still have the opportunity to make our cities more liveable; we still have the opportunity to improve the quality of life in our cities.

Mr. Benjamin: Let us send the people back to the farms.

Mr. Alexander: Someone says, send them back to the farms! As a result of the government's farm policies, people have been leaving the farms and moving to the cities, thus aggravating a situation that is already bad. Our cities can either be regarded as disaster areas that are beyond saving, or as an oppor-

[Mr. Alexander.]

tunity to learn more about man and his relationship to the environment. I have absolutely no hesitation or reservation in standing in support of this motion moved by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby, which reads:

That this House condemns the government for its failure to establish an urban policy for Canada.

I will support that motion.

Mr. Warren Allmand (Noire-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to enter this debate as a representative from metropolitan Montreal, the Canadian metropolis, a city which has confronting it practically every urban problem imaginable. In some cases these problems have been handled well, and in other cases not so well. It is from studying the urban problems of a city like Montreal that we can appreciate the difficulties to be faced in formulating an urban policy for Canada. The weakness of the motion before us, and of the speeches thus far in support of it, is that no solution has been put forward to meet the problems in the cities. Both the motion and the speeches are extremely vague and too general.

It is true that there has been a listing of the problems in our cities. We have had a litany of those problems—pollution, urban transportation, urban renewal, housing and so on. But I have heard the problems enunciated before with much better effectiveness by the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Andras) who is here today, by the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand), the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson), and other members on this side of the House.

What is the urban policy that the opposition would like to see adopted? In his speech, the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) referred to policies for arts, policies for parks, policies for pensions, policies for welfare. I got the impression that he means by an urban policy a comprehensive policy to cover all areas of government concern. I was a little discouraged by his presentation, because I felt he was not dealing with those problems that are usually considered as urban problems as such.

How would the opposition solve the problem of implementing an urban policy for Canada? For example, the region of greater Montreal this is composed of 28 independent municipalities on the island of Montreal; one municipality on the island of Laval which, incidentally, originally included many municipalities that have been amalgamated during recent years; and 14 other indepen-