

mimeograph submission which was distributed at the time Professor Dennis reported to the committee. I read the following:

One of the criteria for selection of NIP areas should be the need for the type of assistance contemplated. That criterion should be clearly stated in the legislation, to shape the proposed agreements.

Here is the point where Professor Dennis is completely at odds with the hon. member for St. Paul's:

NIP funds should not be spent in middle and upper income areas, unless the volume of funding is increased drastically.

One cannot live in cities such as Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver without knowing that many areas which contained pretty fine housing have deteriorated markedly over the past ten or 15 years. I will certainly join with any hon. member who wants to urge the government to adopt programs to stop this deterioration.

I will be dealing with the question of how much money the government is prepared to put into housing improvements, into stopping the deterioration of existing houses, and into encouraging the building of houses at prices which people with moderate and low incomes can afford, either to own or rent. Here, we are talking actually about a small amount of money, and the total needs of the Canadian people will not be met. Certainly during the last few years, the housing needs of people in the low income brackets, and even of people in the middle income brackets, have not been met. If we start out with too small a sum of money for any of the plans which the minister has proposed, then I say to him and to the hon. member for St. Paul's that we will continue to have substantial problems, because most of the available money in one way or another will be pumped into the provision of housing for middle income and upper income people.

I submit that while middle income people are paying too much for housing accommodation, whether they rent or own it, in one way or another they can satisfy their own needs. They may have to scrape a little on other living expenses. As a matter of fact, when I look at the real estate advertisements in the Toronto newspapers I wonder how people can afford to pay \$50,000 and \$60,000 for the homes which are advertised in page after page. But, as I say, those people are able to meet their own needs. People in the lower income brackets have not been able to get decent accommodation at a cost they can afford. Because of all this, I agree with Professor Dennis, I do not pretend to be an expert in this field, but Professor Dennis is not only an expert, in addition he had a group of people working with him who are extremely knowledgeable about housing needs in Canada.

Mr. Atkey: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quoting liberally from Professor Dennis. He quotes from Professor Dennis in relation to the other program, the Neighbourhood Improvement Program. The matter under consideration is the Residential Rehabilitation Program. I would be glad if he would quote Professor Dennis' remarks on it, because they sustain the position I put forward.

Mr. Orlikow: Well, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Atkey: Page 11.

National Housing Act

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has invited me to do this. He has even given me the page.

Mr. Atkey: The top paragraph.

Mr. Orlikow: It is the top paragraph on page 11 which reads:

Section 34.12 excludes absentee landlords from eligibility for assistance outside NIP areas. Presumably this overrides the provision empowering federal-provincial agreements to make exceptions. Once again the non-urban (or at least non-centre city) tenant suffers, for no valid reason.

Not being a lawyer, Mr. Speaker, my first reading of that paragraph does not prompt me to interpret it in the same way as the hon. member for St. Paul's does, as affecting the argument which I am making. The point I want to make is a very simple one. I am not concerned about the housing needs of members of parliament, professors, lawyers or doctors, or indeed even of skilled workers in auto and steel plants who, for the first time in many years, are earning wages and salaries which enable them to get housing accommodation for themselves. I am concerned about the people in the major cities who have not been able to get housing accommodation for themselves. I do not know whether to be sad or happy about the fact that the price of homes in Winnipeg has not suffered the mad increase that the price of housing in places such as Toronto has. But even in Winnipeg, the price of homes over the last two years has increased at a tremendous rate.

I go back to what I interpret to be the spirit of the Dennis report, and certainly of the Charney report, which is that our housing policies ought to have as their first priority something which they have not had until now. Whether the main fault be in the legislation, in the administration by CMHC, or in the thrust of recent government policy, both Liberal and Conservative, the fact remains that we have not had an outright drive to meet the housing needs of the hundreds of thousands of people in the low income brackets who live in our major cities, who simply cannot afford to purchase housing on their own, or to rent it at a cost they can afford.

Despite all the great speeches and the supposedly imaginative proposals of the minister, and of former ministers in charge of housing during the last three or four years, from month to month and from year to year the situation has become much worse. I wish to close by quoting just one more sentence from page 7 of Professor Dennis' brief, which reads:

• (1550)

—measures to be taken to ensure that the public will obtain any economic benefits that may be obtained from the lands and services in respect of which the loans are made.—

I suggest that this should apply to lands as well. People in the lower income brackets have a very difficult time getting some of the benefits. Of the hundreds of millions of dollars which federal governments of both political stripes have pumped into housing over the last 20 years, 95 per cent of the benefits have gone to the people in the middle and upper brackets. I should like to see a sharp reversal of that kind of policy, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, may I rise briefly to indicate on