

The Address—Mr. Danson

lems in general. It is a response which involves many federal agencies. It is a response which commits us to genuine and effective consultation with other levels of government. It is a commitment which I intend to carry out fully.

With regard to the special planning opportunities within the national capital region, I should like to remind the House, Mr. Speaker, that the NCC has had, and will continue to have, a major impact on the development, functioning and quality of life in this area which, apart from its national significance, is also a thriving city. In fulfilling this role, the NCC is proposing two interrelated federal development strategies—one for the heart, or core, of the capital and the other for the capital region as a whole.

A major objective of the core area planning is to link, physically and economically, the centres of Ottawa and Hull as the strong and dynamic heart of the national capital region which reflects and respects Canadian cultural life styles—a vibrant capital in which all Canadians feel at home and of which they are part. The major elements defining the image of the capital—the parliamentary, judicial and cultural institutions, as well as a major part of the federal administrative function—will continue to be located in the centre of the capital. At the same time, we will seek a diversity of land use in the core area, emphasizing residential use, as well as governmental, retail and other business activities.

In the wider national capital region, in face of the pressures of present and anticipated urban growth which could threaten the very quality of life as well as the role of the capital region, the NCC is proposing a framework of development for the next three decades, just as the Greber plan did for the last two decades. The planning concept for tomorrow's capital is not meant to be a master plan but, rather, a working document designed to focus intergovernmental and public dialogue toward a common set of development objectives. This document will be released within a few weeks. Such consensus is crucial at this time because of the various planning activities under way by other levels of government and groups in the capital region. A further study bearing on the development of the national capital region is the Fullerton report. This study deals with the administrative and organizational framework for the capital. In light of all these recommendations, proposals and plans affecting the area, the government is committed to the establishment of a special committee of the Senate and the House of Commons to consider questions relating to the future of the national capital region.

I would like to speak now for a few minutes about another extremely important aspect of my responsibilities, the goal of putting good housing within the reach of all Canadians in all parts of Canada. This year, because of economic conditions which are common to all countries, the housing industry in Canada will not be able to maintain the remarkable record of growth which has been established over the last few years. I will deal, in a moment, with the present housing situation in Canada and the action which the federal government is taking, and will take, to deal with it.

When I suggested a few days ago, Mr. Speaker, that Canadians, by and large, are among the best housed people

[Mr. Danson.]

in the world, some hon. members opposite seemed to express some skepticism. That is their job. I should like to return to that theme now, very briefly, by citing some accomplishments of the last six years during the term of this government. During that time, Mr. Speaker, 1,350,000 new homes were built in Canada, while in the same period 700,000 new families were formed. We have not only been keeping up with the needs of new families for homes; our building rate has been almost twice that of family formations. This is fortified by the knowledge that in the last four or five years we have had no place in the bedrooms of the nation.

Mr. Gillies: No bedrooms, that's all.

Mr. Danson: In human terms, this represents not just 1,350,000 housing units but homes for almost 5½ million men, women and children. This record has been achieved, Mr. Speaker, not only by sound housing policies but by a housing industry which, in terms of efficiency and productivity, is among the best in the world. I want to preserve a competitive, viable house building industry in this country as an essential partner with government in fulfilling people's needs. It is a strong and efficient construction industry and financial community in this country that will deliver homes to Canadians.

It is my intention to use existing programs, and new ones which I am developing, to stimulate this sector and to make certain that it is productive, competitive and responsible. Governments do not build homes, builders do. We must provide the climate and support to make certain they do so for Canadians of all economic groups. We must exact the maximum leverage from every public dollar spent to unlock the greater resources of the private lenders and builders. The Economic Council of Canada told us that if we were to meet the needs of Canadians, we would have to build a million homes between 1969 and 1973. We accepted that challenge and we built 1,153,000 houses in that period, exceeding the ECC target by a substantial margin and surpassing 200,000 units every year.

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I know very well, Mr. Speaker, that it is not enough just to build houses. We have to build the kind of houses people need and can afford. In the six-year period from 1968 to 1973, we produced more than a quarter-million units of housing for low income people, at an investment of well over \$2.5 billion. If the significance of those numbers is not evident, let me add that it is more than three times as many low income homes as were built in the previous 22 years.

Housing itself, of course, is not our only concern. In the same six-year period we responded to the demand of Canadian municipalities for almost \$5 billion in loans for sewage treatment facilities, and wrote off 25 per cent of those loans as an investment by the federal government in the interests of clean water and soil and good urban planning. That is a record of which any government can be proud. It is still a matter of deep concern to me, and to the government, that good housing is not equally available to all Canadians throughout Canada; but we have made significant strides towards that goal and we are constantly increasing our efforts. If we have to weather a few bad