

munity development program, a land bank or land assembly program?

If, Mr. Speaker, we are seriously concerned to implement what is truly a national housing act, it will only be possible to do so by involving people in front of the firing line, municipal governments and, if need be, even service organizations—those for whom the act was designed in the first place. I know all the great arguments that are made about the rights of provincial governments to deal with municipalities and about how they are in conflict with the law that prevails throughout the land. But we must accept a challenge to change the laws if they are not consonant with what we are trying to do. I suggest we could do away with cumbersome regional administration and set up an administration that instead of dealing with contractors would deal with all people through their elected representatives.

I must admit, however, Mr. Speaker, that there are two hitches in my plan which would have to be overcome. Firstly, we would have to make the act even more flexible so it could be implemented to meet an even greater variety of regional and local needs. Secondly, the minister will be challenged to find four times the amount of money that his budget now calls for. If he is to implement his housing policies, the money allotted to him through the budget will not be nearly enough.

It almost seems to me that this is the real reason the act is so cumbersome and the mountains of red tape are so high. If we are to find a practical solution to Canada's housing crisis, the minister's budget is going to look like the estimates for the Unemployment Insurance Commission. This is why I believe we are not really serious about having a national housing act. With all the other luxuries to which we are accustomed, we simply cannot afford to have all Canadians living in decent homes.

I suggest this is also a reason why the government has not removed the 11 per cent sales tax on building materials. We do not have the guts to face the challenge that this would present. Meanwhile, social and human costs remain staggering. Yet another generation of people will walk in the footsteps of their parents, having been born in the gutter or under a stump, wasting their lives by being a burden to our society before dying in the same place.

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I share with my colleague the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) the view that the housing crisis facing many Canadians today, both as individuals and as members of families, is due to many years of accumulated neglect. This crisis is based on the fact that financial aid has been available through legislation to assist in providing housing for those who need it the least—the upper 10 per cent or perhaps, at best, the upper 25 per cent of the income brackets in Canada.

Canadian housing performance as it affects average and low-income Canadians has lagged behind that of many other industrial countries throughout the world during years of both Liberal and Conservative administrations. I appreciate and would underline the point made by my colleagues the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby and the hon. member for Broadview (Mr. Gilbert) that the success of the various programs included in Bill C-133 will

depend upon the government making adequate funds available to finance these various programs, the passage of adequate regulations filling in the details of the act, which, as so often, are vague, and lastly upon vigorous administration.

Nevertheless, I want to speak primarily about two aspects of this bill which I welcome and commend, a bill which I will not only support on second reading but, subject to suitable amendments, will seek to get enacted into law as soon as possible. I refer to the provisions relating to the rehabilitation of existing housing as distinct from the building of new housing. Both the rehabilitation of existing housing and the building of new houses are important, but the former has been neglected for a long time, as is well documented in the so-called Dennis report. I notice that in its submission to the government today, the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities, representing as it does many municipalities across Canada, said that very little money has been made available for the purchase, rehabilitation or repair of existing housing, or for the extension of services to raw land.

Secondly, I wish to refer to the provisions for assisting the financing of co-operative housing, which I welcome. As far as the rehabilitation of existing housing is concerned, perhaps I may be permitted to say that ever since I was elected to this House this has been a cause I have had very much at heart and have urged in the House from time to time, partly because it is common sense to preserve an existing stock of housing and to spend, say, \$3,000 or \$4,000 on preserving an existing unit adequately serviced rather than spend \$15,000 to \$20,000 building a new house in an area where you must also provide additional services. Another reason I have always supported the financing of the rehabilitation of existing housing is that it fits in with the needs of those in my own constituency, which I shall discuss more fully later.

• (2020)

My constituency is a built-up residential area. It has many attractions and very good existing services. It is not an area fit for the bulldozer or for residential programs such as have been conceived in the past. However, the moderate and low-income people who live in the area need assistance in financing the maintenance and development as well as the renewal of their present housing.

Public funds available for grants and loans for the rehabilitation and improvement of housing are a most necessary addition to any improvement program. If we are to achieve the goal of access to decent housing for all Canadians which the minister and all of us proclaim, we cannot leave existing poor housing—and it is estimated there are at least one million houses which can be defined in this way—until this housing has become intolerable and must be totally replaced at very great expense. I join with the metro Toronto housing task force which recently made a submission to the minister in expressing my pleasure that the federal contribution is not contingent upon a matching provincial contribution, as was the case in the previous legislation introduced in this House. This is a highly desirable aspect.