

In reply to my questions the minister said that the program was going quite well, although some of the provinces had not responded. He did not refer at all to the Northwest Territories and the Yukon where there was no requirement for provincial co-operation. He said that 24 units had been built after one season of construction. I suppose you have to start somewhere, but 24 out of 50,000 is not a great achievement.

I received a letter dated April 30, 1974, from the former minister who said:

We have just given a grant of \$219,000 to BCANSI—

That is the British Columbia Association of Non-Status Indians.

—to assist them in developing a housing delivery system. Their proposal includes the construction of 3,500 new houses, the upgrading of 1,750 existing houses and the purchase of 1,750 houses for resale or rental to native people over a period of seven years. For the current year they have set as a goal the construction of 200 new units and the acquisition of another 200 existing units. They also hope to undertake an extensive rehabilitation and renovation program.

I should like to know if 200 new homes have been built in British Columbia, and whether 200 homes have been rehabilitated. I should like to know how well that delivery program, which cost \$219,000 in 1974, is working. I do not see any activity in British Columbia that would reflect that kind of investment.

The native and rural housing program was promised to the native people in 1971 and 1972. At a meeting with a native group on November 21, 1973, the then minister said he would soon be ready to announce a native program. About the same time a senior official at CMHC who was responsible for that program was accused of showing it to the native people before it was announced. He was dismissed as a result of this, and the program was delayed.

The minister said the program will be worth waiting for and the native people believed him. They have demonstrated patience beyond comprehension over the last 100 years, Madam Speaker. I guess we can wait another two weeks. At one time we were told we had only a month to wait before the implementation of the program, and another time, that we had only three months to wait. Clearly, there is no such thing as a native people's housing program. The native people have been cheated again. As far as I know, there is not any native housing project.

● (1740)

At one time officials of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation met with people of the native community in the cities and on the reserves. I spoke to the minister about the need for housing for native peoples on reserves. The minister said there would be no problem. His officials were to consult with the natives, and native peoples were to be provided with housing, including low-cost rental housing, public housing and co-operating housing.

When these programs were suggested to native peoples, they, instead of becoming excited, reacted in an unexpected way. They said that the treaties stipulated that Her Majesty would be responsible for providing native peoples with proper shelter. They also said that the minister's programs would perpetuate them as recipients of welfare. For those reasons they were not interested in co-operating with the minister. They did not like his fancy programs.

National Housing Act

Clearly, this country lacks a native people's and rural housing program. The \$10,000 which is available to people living on reserves for the building of a house is inadequate, considering present conditions. I say this, although the minister has treated me well and granted me private audiences to discuss this problem. He is a new minister and aware of the problem.

I see that my colleague from Skeena is looking at me. Is she happy with what the people at Central Mortgage and Housing have done? I trust she can defend their actions. I know some of the problems in the constituency of Skeena, because they are similar to many of the problems in my constituency and other areas of Canada. I think she will find it difficult to make a good case for the present system, because it does not respond to real need.

You see, Madam Speaker, in Canada there is a dual standard in housing. There is one standard for urban centres where the votes are, and another for rural areas where the need is. I should like to attend some meetings with my colleagues from Skeena and see how she defends this program. I suggest she will find it difficult to defend it.

An hon. Member: No votes, no houses.

Mr. Oberle: Quite. I managed, by scrounging and scheming, to obtain 12 homes out of 24 which have been built so far under the program which calls for 50,000 housing units to be built.

I want to mention an idea that is exciting, looks good on paper, and has to do with new innovations in building construction. Over the weekend I visited a small factory in Prince George which manufactures new types of building blocks. Engineers of Central Mortgage and Housing and private engineers have examined these building blocks and given them a clean bill of health. They are strong, suitable for our northern areas, and ready to be used. The factory has been set up and the person in charge has already built two homes of 1,200 square feet, one costing about \$13,500 and built by a contractor, and the other costing about \$10,000, and built by a husband and wife.

The blocks are easy to assemble. I asked the factory manager what response he has had from Central Mortgage and Housing. He said, "Well, of course we cannot get financing outside the city". He said that because of local bylaws builders are reluctant to put up homes made of these blocks. I hope that the minister can avail himself of the diligent work which has been done by the engineering department of that factory, so that the people of Canada may benefit. I know of several interesting innovations in housing which could be used, particularly for native housing in rural and northern areas.

I hope the minister will insist that officials serving in various areas of this country will examine various projects and schemes of the type I have outlined, and help to sell them to those concerned. In Prince George we retained the services of a social development officer. She is a capable lady who works out of an office in Prince George. I hope she will visit the factory I mentioned and recommend use of the new building blocks in the Yukon, central and northern British Columbia, and other areas where the need is great.