

Urban Affairs

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY S.O. 58—NON-CONFIDENCE MOTION—
REPUDIATION OF GOVERNMENT'S URBAN DEMONSTRATION
PROGRAM**Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North)** moved:

That this House repudiates the government's \$100 million urban demonstration program as a diversionary tactic and clearly ineffective to assist in solving the existing housing crisis and accordingly has no confidence in the government.

● (1520)

He said: Mr. Speaker, in order to give chronological order to this debate today I should like to remind the House that yesterday we moved the following motion for debate on that opposition day:

That this House do now consider the record, objectives and programs of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs in light of the urgent needs of urban Canada.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, that was a non-voting motion. Speeches were made by hon. members of all parties, but in respect of that motion the House was not called upon to make a decision. That is a result of the implementation of the new rules which removed the consideration of supply from the House of Commons and gave sole jurisdiction over estimates to the committees. Under the new rules a certain number of days are assigned to opposition motions, some of which are non-voting and some of which are voted upon. In line with what we said yesterday, today we are going to zero in on the housing crisis in Canada. In order to put this motion in chronological order I should read it:

That this House repudiates the government's \$100 million Urban Demonstration Program as a diversionary tactic and clearly ineffective to assist in solving the existing housing crisis and accordingly has no confidence in the government.

In this context I should like to emphasize the word "repudiate", and the phrase "diversionary tactic". This motion calls for a vote tonight. Under the old system, when the government asked for supply a motion such as this was debated for two days with a vote taken on the second day. With the system under which we operate today I think we must not only set out our programs as positive alternatives, which we have already done, if we are to be critical, as we have been in reference to the \$100 million Urban Demonstration Program, but we must defend the taxpayers of Canada by pointing out the deficiencies of the government's programs.

One of the deficiencies of this program is that, not only is the government now to spend \$54,794 per day for five years on another experiment or study, but it is using this as a diversionary tactic to cover up the ineffectiveness of the minister and the government in solving the existing housing crisis in Canada. When I refer to the housing crisis, I am referring to the price of housing, the price of serviced land, and the fact that only 5 per cent of the wage earners in most of our cities today are able to buy their own homes. The minister can talk all he wants about the number of housing starts, but statistics are not what the Canadian people are looking for; they are looking for

[Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton).]

action so that they can afford to purchase shelter in accordance with their earnings, in this situation in which we have the highest level of inflation we have had for years.

An hon. Member: Amen.

Mr. Woolliams: I heard the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia) say: "Amen". Let me remind the House that yesterday the minister, in his usual manner, provided no solution at all to the ever-spiralling cost of serviced land or the ever-spiralling cost of housing. He offered no comfort to the wage earners or those people who find themselves on any type of fixed income. I think I speak clearly for my party in this regard when I say that we should not only speak in defence of the taxpayers of Canada, we should set forth positive programs designed to provide shelter at reasonable costs. We must make our suggestions match our needs.

For that reason we have moved the motion which appears today on the order paper and which you just read, Mr. Speaker. In this way we not only make our words work for the people of this country, we make our deeds work for them. We show the country just where we stand in respect of this government's program designed to solve the national housing crisis. We have moved this motion to zero in on this power spending program of the minister which definitely will not provide housing at a cost within the reach of the average income earner.

We repudiate the program of this government to spend another \$100 million on another demonstration program. Yesterday I spoke about 18 studies which have been carried out in the last three years. Time does not permit me to outline them again. I suggest there have been hundreds of studies, yet we are supposed to spend another \$100 million on another study of a problem in respect of which this government has been so irresponsible in its failure to find a solution. We repudiate this additional study by way of another urban demonstration program, just as we repudiate this government's irresponsibility in failing to face up to this national housing crisis. We will continue to fight this program, and we will again indicate today how we feel about this government's efforts to solve this crisis.

Yesterday we set out in no uncertain terms where we stand with reference to the government's housing policies. We have also set out clearly our policies in respect of this crisis in Canada. I was pleased to hear the minister yesterday quote with affection the Progressive Conservative housing policies. I can understand that these policies were a challenge to him as his policy is one wrapped up in statistics. He is using the old refrain we have heard over and over again. He has referred to the number of housing starts, 260,000 I think he said, but the Canadian people are not interested in statistics. I suggest they are interested in one thing, and that is homes they can afford to buy. That is the thing in which they are interested.

No amount of statistics in a white paper will solve this crisis. Yesterday we pointed out very clearly that our constitution places a responsibility on the federal government to become involved in housing programs. If that were not true there would be no job for this minister. If he does not have such a responsibility toward the Canadian people, then what is the function of the Central Mortgage