

Statements by Ministers

passing the buck to provincial Governments. In 1979 the federal Government gave British Columbia control of senior citizens' housing. The track record of the Government of the Province of British Columbia in 1974 was that 1,300 units were put on the market. In 1978, 1,700 units were put on the market. In 1979, it shrunk to 600 units. In 1980 it was 250 units. In 1983 it was 350 units. If we look at the records of the provinces, and at the amount of money spent in 1984 on a province-by-province basis per capita for housing, we find the two worst producers at that time were the Province of British Columbia and the former Conservative Government of Ontario. That was at a time when the soon-to-be-appointed President of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation was the Minister of Housing. We saw the social credit Government in British Columbia spend an abysmal \$13 per person on housing in 1984. The Government of Ontario spent a paltry \$19 per person.

I understand the Minister did not want to announce the appointment of the new president of CMHC this week and that it may be coming next week, but the very same person who had the power to reduce the expenditure to \$19 per capita in the Province of Ontario is going to now head the corporation which will be negotiating with the provinces the transfer of responsibility. That will mean places like British Columbia, which has no commitment to social housing, which does not believe in social housing, which is against it, will be able to negotiate the transfer of those responsibilities.

The Minister attempts to pass this as a sop by saying that for the first three years there will be a conditional agreement and there will be discussion between the provinces and the federal Government. I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that when I was in British Columbia, the message was loud and clear from the provincial Government of British Columbia: "Hands off social housing". There was a time in this country under previous Liberal Governments when the development of social housing stock was a responsibility. But with this document, in one fell swoop the Minister is saying that we will attack the problems of the market-place by rent supplements and by hand-overs based on the difference between the cost of a project and the income of a project.

The Minister suggested that is not going to lead to ghettoization but if you were a project manager, Mr. Speaker, and the amount of money you will get from the Government is directly dependent upon the income levels of those people in the units, obviously, the lower income you can find for the unit, the more Government subsidy you will see. We will see a return to the kind of ghettoization which resulted from a national housing policy put in place in the 1960s which saw all low-income people lumped together in one building, in one subsidy, in one development. We can look at Regent Park in Toronto. We will be creating more and more Regent Parks at a time when non-profit organizations and social housing organizations will not have the capacity to develop the kind of base budgets which have allowed this country to accrue a certain level of housing stock over the last 25 years.

● (1550)

If there is one thing of which this country can be proud and has been proud it is that we have been world leaders in the development of new approaches to housing. We have not wanted to stick all the poor people on the same block. We have believed in a mix of people and we have funded mortgages which have allowed church organizations, municipalities and non-profit groups to develop projects which can integrate into the community those people of low, medium and higher incomes. We have done this because we believe it is important to have that kind of integration. With this policy, we will see in one fell swoop the kind of ghettoization about which even the Minister made reference in his speech.

The Minister said that a number of organizations spoke to him about the difficulties inherent in the kind of policy that he is now attempting to introduce. He suggests that he received strong representations calling for the continuation of some income mixing to avoid low-income ghettos and the community resistance they might generate. However, he provides a caveat to that. He says that the definition of those in need is broad enough to allow for a considerable range of income groups to be considered. The Minister is an intelligent man and he recognizes that this policy will lead to ghettoization. The Minister suggests that provinces will have the opportunity of allowing other people to get involved in projects, people who may not specifically meet the Government's income-mix requirements. However, he also says that in such cases, federal subsidies will not apply. In other words, unless every future housing program across the country is directed specifically toward the ghettoized kind of Regent Park mentality on which we gave up a decade ago, it will not be eligible for federal subsidies.

I would like to know from the Minister the definition of need. When he dealt with the definition of need in the RRAP program, he said that anyone earning over \$13,000 was no longer eligible for RRAP funding. That was his definition of need six months ago. In fact, I believe the Minister should have tabled those requirements with the statement he has made.

The Minister also talked about making different determinations in different areas of the country depending upon the vacancy rate. According to the most recent, hot-off-the-wire story from November 20, 1985, vacancy rates have dropped to a four-year low across the country. In the Chicoutimi-Jonquière region, the vacancy rate is 3.2 per cent. In Edmonton, it is 4.4 per cent; in Windsor, it is .7 per cent, in Ottawa, it is .9 per cent; in St. Catharines, it is .3 per cent. I would like the Minister to table in the House a list of the areas across the country in which he believes there is an adequate housing supply because those particular designations have not been made in his statement.

What most frightens me is the suggestion made by the Minister that this program will now be targeted only to those who need it most and that the passing over of responsibility from the federal to the provincial Governments is a positive thing. In some provinces, this will be the case. In the Province