

Business of Supply

that more than half the poverty in Canada is rooted in the metropolitan areas and it is important that the government meet this particular problem. The gentleman said in Vancouver that a Liberal government would give increased aid to low-cost housing projects. His words have perhaps a little more than ordinary weight since he was the architect of the phrase "the just society".

Then we go to another statesman not as distinguished as the first; one might consider him also obsolete since he has gone to the other place. Nevertheless, in a speech at Winnipeg on May 29 this year the government house leader in the other place said that high interest rates on mortgage loans will be reduced if the Liberal government is successful in its drive to reduce expenditures and achieve a balanced budget. This is the Delphic oracle at its best. Most people presumably took from this that expenditures would be reduced, the budget would come in balanced, and therefore high interest rates on mortgage loans would be reduced. As we all know now, exactly the reverse has happened.

Not to leave the present minister responsible for housing out of the preamble I would quote his remarks, again in Vancouver, on June 13 as reported by the Canadian Press:

The Prime Minister has a policy of not making expensive election promises. This was in order to get a mandate that would give him a free hand in attacking high interest rates, unemployment and the housing shortage.

Mr. Woolliams: Who said that?

Mr. McCleave: That was the present Minister of Transport. The high interest rates have gone higher; the high unemployment has gone higher and the housing shortage has become more acute. These are the programs and policies—perhaps one could really call them prattle—that were given to the Canadian people last year on the important topic of housing.

Now, sir, in respect of the purpose of the four exercises in \$1 amounts that we are being asked to give our blessing to, I think what is happening was well put forth in an exchange between the hon. member for Edmonton West and the minister before the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates at its hearing of last Thursday, February 27. I shall quote from page 241 of the Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence:

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): That is all I have on this except again the general proposition as to why this was done by supplementary estimate.

Mr. Hellyer: In this case, Mr. Lambert, when we anticipated introducing amendments to the act

[Mr. McCleave.]

within a few weeks anyway, we needed sufficient statutory authority to get us over the period in between. In that event, it makes sense to do it this way.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): You just told me that you wanted to get through to March 31, 1970.

Mr. Hellyer: There is always the possibility that Parliament might not approve legislation—

Well, that is something; we might not approve the legislation which is so necessary to get the program through.

—or we may get run over by a truck or something.

That is the royal "we". The quotation continues:

You never know, so it is wise to have a little ahead.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): This is going to be the cushion, is it? This was coming under a guillotine. Mr. Minister, I am going to repeat, you heard me tell Mr. Drury, that this is a bad practice as far as many of us are concerned. It would be far more open, and I think you will be further ahead in the end, to come forward legitimately with statutory amendments rather than these \$1 items.

Mr. Hellyer: We will be glad to note that. Also, as I say, I will be happy if we can introduce amendments to the act and provide larger limits which will obviate the necessity of doing this.

It seems obvious from that exchange and certainly from all the unanswered questions in the committee that this was a measure of expediency, although the minister must have raised many eyebrows in the committee when he suggested the possibility parliament might not approve legislation and therefore this was a very useful way to get it done. I suggest the housing problems of Canada need more than expedient treatment.

The questions I should like to ask the minister arise from the four \$1 items to which I have referred. These are the items which increase the amounts that may be advanced for direct lending, and I should like to know how close we are to the present ceilings now. The present ceiling is \$4,600 million. The proposed new ceiling would be \$5,200 million. My first question to the minister in respect of direct lending under the National Housing Act is, at what point are we now? Perhaps the minister could indicate how quickly he anticipates that the new ceiling will be reached.

• (5:20 p.m.)

My second question is similar and refers to the next item, L117b dealing with student housing. The proposed increase in the ceiling is from \$350 million to \$475 million under section 36C of the National Housing Act. I