

own which has a population of 140,000 and all the hell and dilemma of suburban sprawl, I was very pleased to learn that the federal ministry of urban affairs and housing had made a very real effort to discuss with the provincial and municipal levels of government just what kind of assistance was needed at this level. There was a real tri-level input I believe, Mr. Speaker, and I certainly think that is the way you start out to really help those other two levels of government.

If I can refer to the particular areas that I think are the very essence of the intent of this bill, having said that getting together and creating understanding at all levels before presenting this bill is important, I want to say these areas of real change from the original legislation brought down a year or so ago are the result of this getting together. I think the land banking to which the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka referred a few moments ago is one example of something basic and urgent, which the government has recognized and upon which it certainly has not taken piecemeal action, but very strong and decisive action. As I add it up, over the next five years about half a billion dollars will be provided to try to put back into shape the housing in our urban areas.

It is very true we need development in rural Canada. Areas which have been neglected need help, but there is now a crisis—right now—in our urban areas and that must be met. One of those crises, certainly, in my area in suburban metropolitan Toronto, is the cost of land and the way that influences the cost of housing. Now we have the impossible task for many even in the middle-class, much less the lower middle-class, of finding themselves homes.

• (1550)

Finally, when I talk about the basics of recognize in this bill, I think very much of, and am extremely encouraged about, the inclusion in the neighbourhood improvement program of improvements to commercial properties. I am not referring to Eaton's, Simpsons, Steinbergs or Safeway. I am referring to the little fellow who has built up a small community store and has seen his neighbour's home deteriorate. Perhaps his store has become run down as a result of urban sprawl, and general physical deterioration in an aging community. We must include business, as well as the other factors in the community program, and provide some incentive to improve. I believe this is a very positive step indeed, at a time when small business in this country should be encouraged.

Now, perhaps I might turn to the particular reforms. First, I wish to talk about the new community program. In the address the minister gave to this House a few weeks ago I noted that the objective of the legislation is to help accommodate urban growth other than by urban sprawl and to promote the development of regional growth centres. In my own riding of York West in northwestern metropolitan Toronto, I have seen what urban sprawl can do, not only in respect of the misuse of land not built on previously but also in terms of engulfing a small town with a proud community caught up in the problem of trying to maintain that community. We have seen high rises move next door to a family home which has existed for a period of 40 or 50 years. We have seen the problem confronting people who must move to suburbia to even

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find apartment accommodation which they hopefully can afford, and where they can find available within their budget recreational facilities for their children included which cannot be found at a reasonable price in the heart of a densely settled area. They move out to the far suburbs which includes, in part, my riding. They move into high rises and suddenly find that they are not welcome because other people who have also moved out of the city core, who could afford land previously, now do not want the imposition of density resulting from the construction of high rises. It seems terribly important to me that this new community program will help develop regional growth centres and help fight that kind of urban sprawl which causes very unnecessarily, I believe, confrontation between people seeking a decent place to live.

I am also very pleased that the new community program does not involve merely land and buildings. This legislation provides that loans will be available and will take into account the need for open space, planning and services. It is no good just to throw a chunk of land at the public and throw up a lot of units with the kind of mistakes I believe the Ontario Housing Corporation has made in the province of Ontario, thereby creating terrible ghettos. The problem is to provide the open space and the atmosphere so that a citizen of any income group will know he can find housing where he can live with respect and dignity.

I would like also to say that in that particular program of new communities the expression of the desire to co-ordinate the various federal departments involved is extremely important. A lack of co-ordination, as a matter of fact, has occurred too often in the past at all levels of government and, unfortunately, has brought suffering to one group, namely, the people who seek government assisted housing in their search for a decent place to live. So, interrelation and co-ordination should play a part in that program and allow for certain community experiments in such fields as urban transportation, communication and in the mixed use of land as a concept in contrast to traditional zoning practices. His pledged co-ordination will also help to reduce urban pollution and introduce new models in community development.

I also think it is very promising that this very young and fresh department is willing to say it has learned a lesson in the area of urban affairs, has considered the needs expressed by all levels of government, and now intends to take the initiative. It is also saying it wants to learn, will experiment, and within a short period of time will find out how it can positively and quickly bring forth the most effective measures. On the issue of the land bank, the amount of \$100 million is a major assist in metropolitan Toronto. For instance, in order to obtain land of any kind one must be a very large developer with large financial resources. The end result has been that a very few people have control of the only land available for development. As the private control by a few develops, we find soaring prices and inability for anybody except the very well-to-do to purchase homes. We want to move into our urban communities and drive down the prices the speculators are demanding and also provide, through competition, to them, a lot more housing. This seems to me to be very crucial.