

National Housing Act

specific, not vague, answers from the Minister in this regard. He owes it to the nation, he owes it to the spirit of co-operative federalism, he owes it to us all to tell us exactly what it will mean when Quebec establishes a housing authority, not tomorrow or next week but at this stage of the housing resolution that is before the committee. As the Government stumbles from crisis to crisis in the field of Federal-Provincial relations, much damage is done.

[Translation]

And now, I and, I am sure, all the other members of the opposition, insist upon an answer from the minister concerning the intentions of the province of Quebec.

[Text]

Sir, in this regard I realize the difficulties involved. As a responsible member of the House I realize that in the field of constitutional problems and in the field of Federal-Provincial relations we are traversing some very difficult and delicate ground at the present time, but this does not exonerate the Government from the blame. This does not exonerate the Minister from getting up and making a clear statement about what is going on in this regard, because if he does not, and if the Official Opposition recommendation relating to these problems are not taken up by the Government, I ask what will soon be the next problem.

It will be a crisis in another area of joint jurisdiction, another hastily summoned summit conference meeting with some premier or other. Federal-Provincial relations will be weakened and so will national unity. I say to the Government that the sooner it accepts the recommendations of the right hon. Leader of the Opposition, in a bipartisan way, and establishes a national conference for amending and studying our constitution, the better it will be in order that we might have a modern constitution suited to modern times, a made in Canada constitution. The sooner this is done the better. Every day the Government waits in this regard is a wasted day.

I do not want to look pompously into a crystal ball, but the Minister is only one of many Ministers who will be in this kind of difficulty until the Government accepts, in a bipartisan way, the recommendations of the Leader of the Opposition in the field of Federal-Provincial relations and in the field of modernizing our constitution.

We have no disagreement with the general purport of the resolution. Conservatives have

always believed in the principle of an ownership democracy. We only need to look at the record of our government between 1958 and 1962 to see how we underlined the notion that government should help people to help themselves. Sir, this principle is often underlined by the expediting of self help, self liquidating loans such as housing loans and other loans of this nature that give people an ownership stake in our country. As a government we recognized that it was a good thing to have good farmers on good farms, good independent businessmen owning good independent businesses, and families owning their own homes.

So, Sir, as we go into this housing legislation we can only hope that in some sense, in some real way, the Government is going to begin its war on poverty. Certainly it did not begin the war on poverty in the Budget, a budget that showed itself little concerned with the problems of inflation and how it affects the poor man in this country, a Budget that gave high income people a \$600 reduction and the low salaried person an exemption equivalent to two cups of coffee a week.

The Deputy Chairman: Order. I have allowed the hon. Member to make his preliminary remarks, and I would now hope he would proceed to confine himself more closely to the resolution before the committee.

Mr. Graffey: Well, Mr. Chairman, I only hope that in this housing legislation the Government will show itself sincere and serious about beginning a war on poverty. For example, I would like to know from the Minister, and with good reason, how many urban renewal projects have been undertaken based on the amendments of June, 1964; because we know, Sir, we have now located urban poverty in the centre of our urban metropolitan areas.

Here we find the sick, the aged, the unemployed and many displaced people in our society, living in the run-down centres of our metropolitan areas, and we understand that the resolution before the committee, if it is expedited, can in a very real way go far toward rectifying urban poverty in the middle of our metropolitan areas. It is for this reason I would like to ask the Minister how many urban renewal projects have been undertaken based on the amendments of June, 1964.

What about rural housing, Mr. Chairman? It is my belief that in the future one of the ways we are really going to combat rural poverty is by making sure more people own their own homes in rural areas. I would like