

Supply

groups willing to lend assistance and technical know how to do that. An innovative, imaginative group of people are out there. All it will take is the political will on the part of the Government to provide leadership and allow them to go ahead and do the job required.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments.

Mr. Stackhouse: Mr. Speaker, I welcome this debate which the Opposition motion is affording Members of the House even though it makes the characteristic error of attributing the housing crisis in Metropolitan Toronto to the federal Government. Common sense itself should show, as I regret the last speaker did not indicate, that there is a greater spread of government responsibility over all three levels of Government. Much of the fault lies in the private sector itself. It is absolutely essential that the Government and the House of Commons in general address the problem of housing in our major urban centres because it is necessary to the social well-being of our country.

● (1710)

I have just a moment or two in the time allowed for comments by Members, nevertheless I would like to suggest that we have the potential for a very positive housing policy if we address ourselves to such proposals as the ones I have time only to itemize. I hope to elaborate upon them when I have the chance for a fuller debate in Private Members' Hour some time within the next few weeks on this same subject. I would like my neighbour and friend to join in that debate.

For example, we need a greater incentive for apartment construction. The only way we can drive rents down in an urban centre like Metro Toronto is by getting a greater supply of apartments. Second, we need the province to review the number of approvals and the cost of approvals needed for a development which drive the price of development up and which is then added to the cost of housing. Third, we need to provide some opportunity for people living in social housing as tenants to obtain ownership of their accommodation. That opportunity has been given in other countries and has been successful. We need to look at it here.

We need some way of addressing the problem of house value speculation by private citizens and companies. Governments have tackled it in the past with some success. We need in this highly inflationary, this explosively inflationary, period of housing prices to make that a priority. We need also to look at the way in which Governments can use land under government control, but not when Canada Mortgage and Housing and the authorities of the Province of Ontario act as if they are private developers themselves, interested primarily in the bottom line. The process of distributing government land to persons who build houses for purchase and who will acquire it for themselves should be done in a way that does not drive up prices in a speculative manner.

I would like some attention to be given, perhaps speakers later in this debate will do so, to a method used successfully by

the federal and provincial Governments a few years ago, namely, to lease land on which houses were constructed so that a low-income person who wanted to own his own house could buy the house and lease the land for a period of time. Later he or she would have an opportunity, when finances were better, to acquire the land. There are ways by which Governments at all three levels can act on behalf of a person who has limited resources now and who is being crowded out of the housing market and unfortunately out of the rental market as well.

Mr. Young: Mr. Speaker, I took it that the Hon. Member was commenting rather than asking a question. I welcome his comments. I tried to be extremely careful to be non-partisan in the course of my speech.

I really believe that the solutions to the housing crisis do not belong to one level of Government. I would make the argument that while Governments can play a major role and provide the means to resolve the housing crisis, I do not think that Governments can do it on their own. When they have tried in the past, very often things have been a mess. Housing construction has taken place at the local level for all the wrong reasons, very often for political reasons and not to serve a need.

A lot of individuals and groups have been involved in providing alternative housing sources over the years. We should be asking them for innovative ideas because they have them. Ideas are best supplied by people who understand the community and who want to provide solutions. I have no objection to one of the suggestions made that perhaps land could be leased by an individual for some period of time until that individual finds himself or herself hopefully in a circumstance whereby he or she could purchase that land. That proposal should be looked at seriously.

This is one of those issues that comes before the House of Commons periodically, not often enough unfortunately, that is non-partisan in nature. This problem affects people across Canada regardless of who represents them politically. It is in that vein that if I offered any criticism in this debate at all, it was against CMHC for not carrying through with its obligations which were made through consultation and negotiation with one of the major groups having expertise in providing alternative housing in Canada. CMHC has not followed through with that commitment and as a result, rather than becoming a part of the solution, CMHC has become a part of the problem and I think that is extremely sad indeed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that a Conservative Member, and NDP Member and some Liberal Members all agree on the importance of a national housing policy, and I think I share the views of the Hon. Member who has just spoken. I really believe that the Government has really missed the boat during the International Year for the Homeless.

Home rehabilitation programs in Montreal in working class districts such as mine are inadequate, and I should like to