

Discussion on Housing

one means by the words "crisis". A philosopher has said that there is always a "present crisis". I suppose the hon. member is one of those who move from crisis to crisis.

• (3:40 p.m.)

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Labour (Mr. Nicholson), who is in charge of Canada's housing policy, spoke last Thursday he tried to tell the house and the country that there really was no housing crisis, that there was only a problem which I suppose one could call a crisis in certain areas. In this connection he mentioned Toronto again and again, but he said that on the whole we were doing quite well. His parliamentary secretary, when speaking a few days ago, told us in great detail that it was easy to get a house in Montreal. I am certain that the Minister of Labour, his parliamentary secretary and possibly the hon. member for Antigonish-Guysborough (Mr. Stewart) are alone in Canada in really believing or in saying that there is no real crisis in housing at present.

If the Minister of Labour thinks that we are being partisan, I suggest to him and to the other members of the government that they look at what the newspapers of Canada are saying and take a close look at what the Liberal newspapers of Canada are saying. Let us take a look at the *Toronto Star*. I think we all know it as a very open and partisan supporter of the Liberal party and the Liberal government. In an editorial which appeared on Thursday, September 28, entitled "More Houses—But Who Can Afford Them", here is what they say about the government's policy and about the Minister of Labour. I am glad I am quoting from the editorial because I am not certain that the words used in it would be quite parliamentary. It reads as follows:

The interest rate announcement, standing alone and unrelated to the ability of ordinary people to pay, shows once again the utter incompetence of Labour Minister John R. Nicholson to handle federal housing policy.

All I can say to that is "amen."

Speaking yesterday for our party on the amendment proposed by the official opposition, my colleague, the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis), said that we would vote for the amendment, that we could really do nothing else. Yet I want to say to the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Chatterton) who moved the amendment that we are voting for it because

[Mr. Stewart.]

of what is in the amendment and not on the basis of the speech made by the hon. member.

I want to deal briefly with the main criticism he made of the government, one which was repeated today in questions put by the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) and the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert). The main criticism was that the reason there is a housing crisis, the reason that the interest rate on housing mortgages had to be raised as it was last week, the reason why there is no money for housing, is that government expenditures have gone up too much, and supposedly the Economic Council is the authority for this statement. I deny the suggestion that the Economic Council made that claim. However, I want to say to the members of the official opposition—and I wish the new leader of the Conservative party, Mr. Stanfield, would use his influence on the members of parliament from his party to prevail on them to be honest and consistent—that if government expenditures are responsible for the difficulties we face in housing, then one needs to look not just at federal government expenditures but at all government expenditures.

The hon. member for Antigonish-Guysborough who has just spoken mentioned the great increase in municipal taxes. I do not want to deal with that subject today because it would take up too much time but let me say that last night I took the trouble of comparing the increases in federal government expenditures with the increases in provincial government expenditures. I found the figures very interesting and I commend them for study to the members of the official opposition.

In 1958 the government of Canada spent \$5.17 billion. Ten years later the estimates of the federal government for 1967-68 show that we are spending \$9.5 billion, an increase of just under 100 per cent. In 1957 the province of Nova Scotia, under the premiership of the present leader of the Conservative party, had a budget of \$58.5 million. In the year 1967 their budget was \$154 million, an increase of almost 300 per cent. I am not being critical of that; I know how much Nova Scotia needs to improve its roads, schools and hospitals. However, I suggest to the members of the opposition that if it is necessary for the federal government to economize so that we can have houses, Nova Scotia should also have to economize.