

the help of the Liberal members on this side of the House. He should have known that the government's program was supported twice by the whole House in support of the budget of November 12, and that indeed the government has placed before the country and before Parliament its plans for an economic program for the country.

I would like to say at the outset that some people might be interested in knowing what the motion is which is before the House or what subjects of discussion were called for by the opposition, in case they are interested, because this might have been difficult in light of the comments or speeches we have heard thus far. The government is urging that we proceed with the immediate creation of two new programs to create employment in key sectors, one being housing. It is for that reason that I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the debate this afternoon.

The government is making a thrust in the area of social programs. It is discharging its social responsibilities. The government has had the responsibility, commencing almost two years ago, the beginning of what we all appreciate as being difficult economic times, to meet its social commitments. It adopted the principle that in difficult economic times we should use our resources in the social area first to help those people who need help the most. I am pleased to have the opportunity to very quickly recount that that is the record of this government, particularly as it affects its responsibility for housing.

As the minister reporting for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to this forum, I invite hon. members to recollect the thrust of the government since it has assumed the new mandate and responsibility. What were those things that we did? What were our first priorities? What is our record in that area? I first draw to mind the fact that we moved to increase the allotment of the government's program, the national program aimed at assisting people of moderate and low income to find housing. These objectives were in our social programs, the co-operative and non-profit programs. We moved to increase those.

Second, we supported those areas of previous government action, such as the assisted housing ownership program and the assisted rental program, past initiatives of the government in assisting people. We moved to bolster these programs. A month after taking on responsibility as minister in this area, the assisted housing ownership program was extended. It was further extended in the budget of November 12, which doubled the amount of subsidy under that program. We have moved to prevent failures in those programs in an attempt to prevent dislocation of many tenants who have found a source of support necessary to them in seeking adequate shelter. Those were movements of this government in its social area.

We expanded the residential rehabilitation assistance program which is directed toward those of modest and low income and toward those people who are handicapped, for example. Referring to the handicapped, in the International Year of the Handicapped we moved to adopt, in a national policy and in all of our social programs, the basic rule that at least 5 per

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cent of all units constructed must be directed toward provision of housing and shelter for the handicapped. I maintain that was the rationale and thrust of the budget provisions pertaining to the housing and shelter needs of Canadians.

Who can forget the submissions, the representations and the many deputations to Parliament on September 15 on behalf of people impacted by high interest rates? The government moved to respond to the various rates. In the budget document, we introduced a plan to support people impacted by higher rates at roll-over time: we proposed a program which would either provide interest deferral with a government guarantee or an outright grant of \$3,000.

However, that is not the main import of my comments this afternoon. It is the other aspect of the budget to which I would like to draw the attention of hon. members. I refer hon. members to the budget paper "The Budget in More Detail", and to the provision of \$350 million which would provide accommodation to those Canadians who most desperately want assistance and need rental accommodation. It is directed to those Canadians who would be assisted, for example, under programs which have been time-tested in co-operation with the federal government, Canada Mortgage and Housing, and the provinces under rent geared to income. We have allocated \$350 million toward a program which would provide a minimum of 15,000 units with potential for an increase, depending on the response to advertisements of that program.

I want to draw the attention of hon. members to the last paragraph on page 14 of the document to which I have referred. It states:

Provision has been made for these housing proposals by special allocations of \$150 million in 1982-83 and \$200 million in 1983-84 to the social affairs envelope. The latter amount is intended to cover potential future year liabilities associated with these measures and to provide—

This is what I would like to underline:

—within the fiscal framework, a contingent reserve for future measures, should they be required.

We have a commitment to this funding. That commitment was introduced by way of legislation tabled in this House by myself before Christmas. It was supported by legislation introduced in this House by way of a bill. It went through first and second reading, and it awaits the response of this House to a program which could create 70,000 jobs for Canadians looking for work in one of the areas which is most seriously impacted by the downturn in the economy.

What has been the reaction of the House? What has been the response of my critic in the official opposition to my request for speedy passage of that legislation?

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Cosgrove: What has been the support of the New Democratic Party, which is asking for jobs, which comes into this House every day saying that we need more jobs in the construction industry and that we need more affordable housing? What has been the response?

An hon. Member: Zilch!