

think they will strengthen this tax bill in front of us and I urge the government not to reject them out of hand. I think that the proposals of a sunset clause and certain ceilings make good sense. I know that these proposals will make sense to the Minister of Finance. I am sure that he wishes there were more ceilings and sunset clauses in some of the measures with which he must deal from day to day. So we will be helping him in trying to convince this House to accept at least some of our proposals for this particular bill.

● (1620)

[Translation]

Mr. Roy (Laval): Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to rise again and speak to Bill C-20 which amends the Income Tax Act in order to provide a tax credit in respect of mortgage interest and home owner property tax. At every stage in the examination of a bill, an hon. member may intervene to make his remarks and, if need be, with the help of those remarks the government or the minister responsible can improve the bill in question. On November 21 last, Mr. Chairman, I rose in the House to wonder out loud about the housing situation in Canada.

I was pointing out the situation in Canada to my colleagues, and I mentioned how proud I was to be part of the Liberal team that has designed and implemented rather exceptional housing policies, if one considers that following a Gallup poll in October, 1968, in which Canadians were asked whether they were more or less satisfied with their housing conditions, 60 per cent said they were satisfied. In 1978, ten years later, 85 per cent of Canadians said they were satisfied with their housing.

In 1968, 34 per cent said they were unsatisfied, whereas in 1978, 13 per cent said in October, 1978, that they were unsatisfied. All this to say, Mr. Speaker, that the building of 235,000 housing units on average during the past ten years under the Liberal government through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has considerably improved housing conditions in Canada. That is why in my remarks I wanted to review housing conditions.

I also expressed my concern as a Liberal about the status of our various housing policies with respect to non-profitable organizations: the municipal infrastructure, the neighbourhood improvement program, the senior citizens residence construction program, the assisted home ownership program and the role of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Of course, I would have been happy to see today in the House a minister responsible for urban affairs who could enlighten me a bit about the future of those programs. But as this is a fiscal policy, it is not a policy designed to improve housing conditions in Canada. It is a fiscal policy, a tax cut, a measure in respect of mortgage rates or property taxes. I wanted in my first intervention to review the housing situation. I should like to

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say today that from a fiscal point of view I cannot object to that tax cut for Canadians.

Every shade of opinion may be expressed about this legislation whether one lives in one area or another of Canada or whether one views it as a social policy, a socioeconomic policy or a fiscal policy. I represent an urban riding located in the second largest Quebec City resulting from the merger of 14 municipalities. I have experienced the problems of these residents and it is in light of meetings I had with the people of Laval that I realized to what extent our existing policies concerning housing assistance for the elderly had been effective. But having studied that policy, which is not a housing policy, I also realized that I do not fully agree with the preceding speaker in the sense that in my view it will not necessarily stimulate housing development.

However, Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that it will stabilize conditions for Canadians who already own a home and who see their mortgage interest or their municipal taxes increase annually. One has to live in a city which has mushroomed over the last ten years to realize how difficult it is for home owners to meet that yearly increase in their municipal property taxes. That is why I will support this bill which will alleviate the tax burden for home owners. This will obviously mean an annual saving.

As I said at the beginning of my comments, when we consider a bill we can improve it and expect to do so through our suggestions to the government, and after discussing this matter with my colleague from Terrebonne, who has also lived in a municipality which has expanded, I intend to support the amendment he suggested to the minister this afternoon to protect the owners of single-family dwellings which are not mortgaged.

In Canada, 27 per cent of all home owners do not hold a mortgage. This means that 2.2 million Canadians who own single-family dwellings and do not have a mortgage will not be able to claim the amount of \$1,250 provided under this bill to reduce the cost of mortgages. We therefore ask the Minister of Finance to consider doubling the amount provided for the municipal tax credit to help these 27 per cent of Canadians whose houses are no longer mortgaged. Over the first year, instead of having the \$62.50 municipal tax credit, home owners who do not have a mortgage will have nothing. If they had a mortgage, they would receive \$125. In my opinion, if this amendment is accepted, not only would an additional 2.2 million families be able to benefit from this legislation, but we would also be doing something for senior citizens, since my colleagues are also anxious to have as many Canadians as possible benefit from this bill.

● (1630)

Since only 6 per cent of senior citizens have a mortgage on their home and a great many of them have only a small house,