

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles)—Veterans Affairs—Proposed increase in pensions of Hong Kong Veterans—government position; the hon. member for Athabasca (Mr. Yewchuk—Multiculturalism—Alleged Change in government policy—Request for assurance to minority groups; the hon. member for Central Nova (Mr. MacKay)—Immigration—Possibility of obtaining counsel for persons facing summary deportation—Review of cases by minister.

It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, private bills, notices of motions (papers) and public bills. There being no item on the order paper under the heading of private bills and notices of motions, the House will proceed to public bills.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS

[English]

CENTRAL MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION ACT

PROVISION TO CHANGE NAME OF CORPORATION TO HABITAT
CANADA

Mr. Jim Fleming (York West) moved that Bill C-215, respecting the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to again speak in this House on my bill proposing that the name "Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation" be changed to "Habitat Canada". I introduced this bill in the twenty-ninth parliament but, unfortunately, because of the length of that parliament and the many bills put forward by private members, I was not able to bring it forward for debate.

In presenting this motion to change the name of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, my intention is to give this institution a designation which will more accurately reflect what it is, what it is doing and what it is becoming. If I am successful, I hope that this bill will effectively focus this institution in the minds of Canadians. Indeed, I believe this is happening now. The present name in almost every respect is inappropriate. It is called Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation at a time when it is making a vigorous effort to decentralize, to distribute authority, initiative and decision-making across the country to ensure that this important national institu-

CMHC Act

tion will respond in a more sensitive way to unique local needs and objectives.

The present title emphasizes the word "mortgage". While the granting and insuring of mortgages is an important aspect of CMHC's daily business, mortgages are just an instrument which the corporation uses in fulfilling its broad social responsibility to improve the living conditions of Canadians. This part of its title, perhaps more than anything else, helps to preserve the notion of a purely financial institution whose main function is to make prudent and profitable investments of public capital. In the minds of most Canadians it is a sort of government bank for mortgages.

The next significant word in its present title is "housing", and certainly the creation of reasonable housing that is accessible to all Canadians continues to be a prime function of this agency, by whatever name it is called. But housing alone and housing in its narrow context does not begin to define the role and objectives of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. As the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Danson) has often said in this House, it is not enough to be concerned simply with housing without regard to the whole environment in which houses are built. That is a view I have heard from all sides of the House. People live not just in houses but in communities. Houses are just one element in the fabric of community which depends for its life on a whole range of physical and social amenities which must be knitted together in a planned and coherent way if we are to serve the human needs of this country.

The growing concern of the government and the corporation for these aspects of community life is reflected in the latest amendments to the National Housing Act, particularly the neighbourhood improvement program, the new communities program, the increased commitments for the public assembly of land—we heard a great deal about that in the last parliament—and in the legislation which we will be asked to consider later this session with regard to sewage treatment assistance. So CMHC is a housing corporation but not just a housing corporation, not always central and not only dealing in mortgages. It is for these reasons, to rid the corporation of a designation that is restrictive and misleading and to give it a new title that dramatizes its broader, more ambitious goals, that my bill proposes that it be known henceforth as Habitat Canada.

This title, it seems to me, connotes, in both the official languages without translation the real work of the corporation which is concerned not just with mortgages and houses but with the places where people live—roads, sewers, parks, schools, churches and shops, as well as houses, and the way all of these elements relate to each other. I am not suggesting, Madam Speaker, that by changing its name we will change the character of the institution. The fact is that the institution has changed and is changing as the needs of Canadians have changed. I think it is only fair that the people who staff and run this institution should no longer be burdened with a cumbersome name that has outlived its relevance. Habitat Canada has a meaning that suggests the breadth of its duties and obligations to the people of Canada. I believe it will become even more meaningful day by day as the activities