

National Housing Act

It may be that the second proposal has already been dealt with. I hope this is the case; I know there has been great pressure on social workers to see it done. This is what these people want and I think it is a good sign when tenants are talking not in terms of staying where they are but of getting out into alternative housing accommodation of their own.

I will bring my remarks to a close by suggesting we have now reached a point when there is no longer any need to place all these people together in big housing projects. I know that in projects in the United States designed for migrant workers and in Sweden, when accommodation is provided for people living on low incomes and on social assistance, the housing is scattered among other housing intended for a wide range of tenants. This gives the people who are being assisted an incentive to play their full part in the community.

I wish we did not have to press for community centres in these public low rental projects. I prefer to see the people mixing with other people in the community when they take their recreation. But I realize this is not possible at present, bearing in mind the location and development of public housing projects. We look forward to the day when these people will not be fenced off. Indeed, I hope we can look forward to a further development as a result of which low rent housing will be scattered throughout housing occupied by the rest of the population so that tenants may become part of the fabric and texture of the community.

● (8:50 p.m.)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérald Laniel (Beauharnois-Salaberry): Mr. Speaker, I shall take only a few minutes during this debate mainly to raise particular points concerning the National Housing Act, and I hope that my recommendations may be included eventually in legislation that may come after the one now before us.

To start with, I must, like most members in this house, I believe, congratulate the minister for the good work he performs in his capacity of minister responsible for the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

I doubt that anybody in this house could charge him of having played politics in the decisions he has made or had the government make concerning the National Housing Act. Our minister, being a serious person, wanted to act as a businessman while studying the

National Housing Act. He sought solutions that might help the government to develop home building and other types of construction in the country, without however interfering with other means of financing which exists at present, a thing that is perhaps desired, at least on occasion, by a certain group of people sitting in this house.

A while ago, the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. MacInnis) complained that the National Housing Act was not yet of sufficient help to the small wage-earner.

I entirely agree with the hon. lady on this score, as does the minister. Nevertheless, the minister must take into account several factors while attempting to amend the National Housing Act. Besides helping or being charitable, there is another very important consideration, the ability to pay.

It is easy to ask all the Canadian people to pledge themselves, to make commitments, to assume the burden of mortgages and interest charges, but somebody has to pay in the end. Social Credit has a ready solution: the elimination of interest.

But here, in the house, when the government has to introduce amendments to some particular act, it must do so seriously; it must not reach for haphazard solutions, which may lead us, God knows where; it must study the situation—

Mr. Caouette: May I put a question to the hon. member?

Mr. Laniel: I am always pleased to answer questions for the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette).

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Speaker, here is my question. The member speaks of a ready solution advocated by Social Credit. Now, I should like to ask the hon. member whether he finds it easier to lend money without interest to foreign countries rather than to Canadian organizations which contribute to the development of Canada.

Which is the easiest way, lending to others or lending to our own people?

Mr. Laniel: The hon. member is raising a point he already raised in the house and I think he did not get a satisfactory answer, for it is not easy to give him an answer to his satisfaction. Moreover, I say to the hon. member that whenever Canada decides to take its own responsibilities in the international field, I am happy to see it do so in the way he has mentioned and not as was done by