

*Government Orders*

There are 13,000 public housing units which fail to meet minimum property standards and more than half of all the units barely meet these standards and are at risk of falling below standard.

The money this government must allocate for renovations has not met these immediate requirements. Given the aging of these public housing units, these conditions have worsened and will continue to worsen and the costs are forever increasing.

Public housing was developed to provide affordable and adequate housing. The public housing program must be deemed a failure because the evaluation indicates that two out of every five tenants still live in core need because their housing costs are too high.

Since 80 per cent of the total repair budget was required within three years, an increase in the budget should have been accompanied by a needs based allocation of funds. This government has deprived CMHC of the resources it needs to meet the needs of these Canadians and provide adequate shelter.

Given the current difficulties with urban crime and safety, this government should get its own properties in order and provide a safe living environment for its tenants.

The Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program was also drastically cut by the federal government in recent years and I have already noted that.

The program is needed to upgrade our private housing stock for Canadians in core need. Statistical evidence indicates that future demand for new housing construction will be generated primarily through immigration. Despite this, the federal government has not facilitated the development of any housing programs that would meet the shelter requirements of legitimate refugee claimants and the increased immigration population in this country.

The federal government must acknowledge its role as a partner in ensuring healthy Canadian communities. While C-82 creates an efficient administrative framework for the Crown corporation, it does not allow for efficient policy delivery.

CMHC's five-year corporate plan outlines the Crown corporation's commitment to "promoting good living environment" and "ensuring that housing and its supporting urban framework combine to produce quality of life in urban environments".

The federal government has not provided the legislative framework which would allow the CMHC to meet

these goals. Instead, the federal government has cut the CMHC's program budget and limited its activities to studies, consultations, demonstrations, evaluations, seminars and conferences.

In the previous corporate plan, CMHC stressed the importance of addressing the problems of "displaced low-income earners, the increase in homelessness, and the eroding safety and security". However, this focus has been eliminated in the current corporate plan due to lack of government commitment.

Although I applaud the efficiency measures aimed at CMHC's administrative functions, I want to chastise the government for ignoring possible improvements to policy efficiency. With a projected savings of \$150 million over five years, I want to urge the government to use these savings to fulfil its responsibilities as a partner in the housing sector.

It really is a partner, along with the provinces, the municipalities, the private non-profit sector, the co-op sector, in working toward solving Canada's housing problems.

While the government might be introducing legislative changes to Bill C-82 to make CMHC work better, it remains that this government must provide the leadership to have affordable housing in this country. It must not relegate its responsibilities to the provinces, the municipalities and other groups.

So while we are supportive of this bill, I look forward to the next stage, of asking some questions of the minister relating to the administrative changes being proposed in this bill.

Let me just say one other thing.

• (2020)

CMHC has served this country well. While the country is trying to redefine itself in terms of its constitutional responsibilities the fact is that housing in this country has been served well because all levels of government, the private sector and the non-profit sectors have all worked together. CMHC has been that glue.

If someone wanted to be really cynical with respect to this bill, and I do not want to be too partisan or cynical, one could say, because this has been a very successful Crown corporation—and I can tell the government right now that we are going to draw a line in the sand if it moves to privatize this Crown corporation which provides equality and equity in terms of affordable housing and mortgage insurance across this whole country.