

buildings. Certainly they must be built on the understanding that they are to meet a need rather than to provide profit for speculators, building and real estate owners.

For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I feel that one could hardly fail to support the amendment of the official opposition though I should have liked it better had it been couched in somewhat broader terms as a criticism not so much of the government's policy regarding housing or mortgage money or the alleged tight money policy, because I am rather doubtful that such strictures could actually be sustained, but rather as a criticism of the government's policy which allows certain groups in our society to control where the bulk of our wealth goes. We may very well have to make a drastic revision in our outlook as to the purpose of our society, but I feel that nothing less than what I have suggested will really solve these problems.

The government has a perfectly good answer for its alleged tight money policy, and it relates to the balance of payments situation. The balance of payments position is always referred to as a reason for coping with inflationary pressures within our own society. However, there are many economists, and perhaps even the bulk of at least Canadian economists, who feel we are tying our hands by maintaining a fixed exchange rate and that if we were prepared to go back to a floating exchange rate our balance of payments problem would solve itself and the question of tight or loose money, if that is the opposite term, would disappear. I am not an economist but I have discussed this matter with many and have found that there is a fairly unanimous opinion among Canadian economists that this might be the solution to our problems of alleged tight money, balance of payments and the necessity of having to put the brakes on our expanding economy to protect our own unit of currency.

Those are the points which I think this amendment should have included rather than the narrow point, important though it is, that money should be made available for adequate housing. I am not sure it is at all possible to ensure that money will be available for housing without taking much more drastic steps than the official opposition apparently is prepared to advocate or the government is prepared to undertake.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the hon. member would permit a question before he resumes his seat. I

Tight Money Policy

am in sympathy with this suggestion that some funds should be diverted to low rental public housing, but when he proposed that certain measures be taken in respect of certain extractive companies, was he proposing a fairly widespread program of nationalization in this country? I should like to understand his position in this regard.

Mr. Cameron (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): I am very pleased to answer that question. As the hon. member for Rosedale is well aware, our constitution would place any suggestion such as he has made in respect of these extractive industries within the jurisdiction of the provincial legislatures which have control over property and civil rights.

For the benefit of the hon. member, let me say that I have advocated very strongly in my party and in my own province that the provincial authorities should take precisely that step. What I was proposing here is something that the federal government could undertake, that is, to take a much larger slice from the net returns of these operations than we are now taking and to take a much closer look at depreciation and depletion allowances and the various other ways by which the net returns of these industries are funnelled into private hands. I would not want for a moment to overlook the opportunity of telling the hon. member that I quite agree with his suggestion that these large extractive industries perhaps should come under public ownership within the provinces.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that I was not making that suggestion but merely directing a question to the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, I should like first of all to congratulate the hon. member for Northumberland (Mr. Hees) who has moved, today, an amendment which affords us the opportunity to discuss one of the most important problems in Canada at the present time, that is an economic problem, in short, a problem involving the economy of the country: the restrictions on credit, home construction, etc.

Mr. Speaker, there is much to say about credit, because with credit a country can develop but, without credit, not only does it not develop, but it falls back and goes into a slump.

As an illustration, I should like to mention the period, say, from 1933 to 1937 when credit