

was not one of laissez-faire and letting things go adrift. It was planned by the government.

Suffice it to mention, Mr. Speaker, that in the case of housing mortgage insurance alone the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation charges only \$35 while the private sector is currently charging between \$200 and \$400. Is this the way small-income citizens and the 400,000 Canadians who need better housing will achieve ownership? Does the minister know that in the last few years a quarter of a million new housing units were built, and those 250,000 units created 250,000 annual jobs?

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCain):** Order, please. I regret to advise the hon. member that her time has expired.

**Mrs. Hervieux-Payette:** Mr. Speaker, may I have another moment? I have just one more sentence.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCain):** Well, just seconds, yes.

**Mrs. Hervieux-Payette:** Would the minister now tell us whether or not he will dismantle CMHC?

**Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to come here this evening and respond to the hon. member's questions. I will tell her at the outset that we are certainly not going to dismantle CMHC.

I want to explain to the hon. member that I do not want her to think I was being facetious the other day when she asked her question. I thought she was putting her question in a rather facetious way herself when she referred to the fox in the chicken coop metaphor, and I am sorry she did not have a chance for a supplementary.

● (2210)

I want to assure the hon. member that, as I said at the outset, we will not do anything to seriously impair or damage CMHC. Quite the contrary, we hope to strengthen the organization. The hon. member, who obviously knows a bit about housing, will recognize that the projections for future demand for housing will have changed, as demography has shown. In future we may be looking more on the question of rehabilitation or renovation of housing, questions such as revitalizing the urban core. The days of urban or suburban sprawl are gone because of energy conservation.

The matters she raises with respect to the task force report and when it will be made public, I can answer as follows. I have not yet seen the final report. When I do, I intend to study it carefully. It will be submitted to cabinet, and indeed so will the considered opinions of CMHC with respect to the housing strategy. It is my intention to make this report public as soon as it has received the proper evaluation.

Again I want to assure the hon. member that both we in the government and CMHC recognize our social responsibilities, and in no way do we intend to de-emphasize or diminish this

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commitment of providing and sustaining affordable shelter to those Canadians who do not have access to it.

I agree with her that there are nearly one half million families who pay over 30 per cent of their income for shelter. This group includes elderly people, single parent families, and young Canadians.

Hon. members, including the hon. member who raised the question, will have an ample opportunity to contribute their thoughts and their expertises to this government's housing policy. I think she would agree that my predecessor last year in Edmonton started the process of disentanglement, but what we are doing—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCain):** Order, please.

### REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT—DREE COMMITMENT RESPECTING SYDNEY STEEL CORPORATION

**Mr. Andy Hogan (Cape Breton-East Richmond):** Mr. Speaker, in reply to my first question concerning the matter of \$50 million promised for Sysco during the last election, the minister mentioned the following:

Considerable moneys in the past, which were allocated, were not managed or used too wisely.

The minister, of course, is correct in his observation, but there is a danger that newspapermen and others will think the federal government has given much more money than it actually has to the provincial publicly-owned steel plant in Sydney since Black Friday on October 13, 1967. The fact is that for almost 13 years what the federal government allocated in grants to the steel plant until the recent \$6 million from the present government, amounted to a combined sum of \$25 million to \$30 million. Before the 1974 election, the federal government gave a loan guarantee of some \$70 million to the steel plant which, while very helpful, is not the same as a grant.

Of course it can be argued that the Nova Scotia government owns the Sydney Steel plant, but it was obvious to some of us that the logical buyer, once Hawker Siddeley pulled out, should have been the Cape Breton Development Corporation which was set up to rehabilitate Cape Breton's economy. With all of Devco's faults, it would have done a better job than the provincial government of Nova Scotia which appeared not to know which end was up in the hiring of top management personnel for the steel plant.

The minister is, of course, quite right, as everybody in Nova Scotia now knows, about the waste and mismanagement at the steel plant which has brought it literally to its knees, with an albatross of some hundreds of millions of dollars in debt.

I should like to ask the minister if he could find out for me what the actual debt is and how much of it is a result of strictly operating deficit and how much is interest payments for the loans by the corporation. On April 28, 1979, Mr. Tom Kent, the then Sysco president, was quoted in the *Cape Breton Post* as saying that the debt was \$166.4 million. Sysco's loss for the last fiscal year was alleged to be \$64.2 million, which