

Housing

losing our ability to obtain shelter. Yet the government has little or nothing to offer thousands of Canadians who are facing the immediate threat of losing their homes.

• (2050)

Bill C-89 hardly even addresses the deep financial problem facing home owners or the housing industry itself. The bill is totally inadequate. If the government had listened to Canadians and found out what they really need, we would have had a better financed more wide-ranging and comprehensive piece of legislation before us today. We can only hope the government will accept some of the amendments and change the bill before it passes the House. I will not hold my breath that such changes will take place. I have come to learn during the ten years that I have been a member of the House that the most uncommon thing to find on the other side is common sense. It is truly unfortunate and tragic that this place is just one more place where theory and theoretical ideas always take precedence over practical ideas which actually work better both in terms of application and in lower costs to the taxpayers in the long run. It is no wonder that our farmers and our producers are the most efficient people to be found anywhere in the world. They are practical people with little time for nonsensical theories and ideas that usually do not have a firm foundation to stand the test of practicality.

Whoever coined the expression that there is no experience like practical experience never spoke a truer word. It is too bad that many people who should know better chose to ignore these words of true wisdom.

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, this is the first opportunity I have had to stand up in the House since last Wednesday, which was a fateful day in the history of the province of Alberta. Last Wednesday was the day when the first separatist was elected to our provincial legislature, the first separatist who ever ran for office. That brought memories of some ten or 12 years ago when there were no separatists elected to public office anywhere in Canada.

As I stand here today, February 23, 1982, I stand with some sense of impending doom, and with a great deal of impending sadness. I look at Bill C-89, an act to amend the National Housing Act and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Act and I ask myself why am I standing here this evening debating a bill of this kind. As I reach out and look for the answer, I find that it is because this country is in crisis. But in a time of crisis, I would hope to see a piece of legislation that might help us overcome that crisis. When I look at Bill C-89, I do not see in this legislation any sense of real hope for average Canadians. I see once again a piece of legislation which is taking the time of the House because the government has decided to engage once more in a piece of public relations chicanery, another piece of public relations trickery.

When there is a problem in Canada and it is identifiable, the government is quick off the mark to say that it will solve the problem. That story lasts three, four or five days or for as much mileage as hon. members of the Liberal Party can get

out of it. Sooner or later in the Parliament of Canada we see the piece of legislation which is supposed to be the solution to the problem. As we read it carefully, we find inevitably that it fails to address the real problem. It simply provides language which is designed to confuse and convince Canadians that the problem is being worked on and being addressed.

If the Clark government had been allowed by the New Democratic Party, the Liberal Party west, to pass the legislation which was before the House in December, 1979, that legislation on mortgage deductibility for home owners in the budget presented by the hon. minister from Newfoundland, which has been judged by those who are experts in their society as the fairest budget in the decade of the 1980s and by the poorest segment of Canadian society—

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is just a matter of clarification of fact. The people of Canada judged that it was not one of the finest pieces of legislation in Canada and turfed out that government.

Mr. Hawkes: The Liberal Party west, the NDP, got sucked in by the so-called experts on the other side. They told them what it said and they did not bother to read it. I tell hon. members to find out what it said and learn what it could have done for Canadians. But they went out like loyal soldiers and sold Canadians a wrong bill of goods.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hawkes: That budget, Mr. Speaker, dealt with the housing issue in the following fashion. It provided tax relief for every home owner in this country who paid municipal taxes. The Liberal members and the NDP members shot it down, and Canadians do not have that relief today. It was a budget that provided relief for every Canadian who owned a home. They were to get tax relief on the interest payments on their mortgage. Members of the NDP stood and moved a motion in this House, supported by the Liberals, and said to Canadians that they could not have mortgage relief or tax relief for municipal taxes because they did not need it. The NDP said that they would put the Liberals back in office. But two years later anyone who held a \$70,000 mortgage in 1979 at 12 per cent and paid \$720 a month is now paying \$1,130 a month. We must not forget that municipal taxes have gone up also. The NDP said that was the kind of program they wanted, and they will put the Liberals in so they can deliver that program to Canadians, and that is what they did.

As if that were not bad enough—because people pay their mortgages and municipal taxes from after tax income, that is the amount of money in pay cheques, the money that is used to make those payments—they elected a government full of deceit and trickery that has doubled the indirect taxes in this country. Do the NDP, the Liberal Party west, and the members opposite, and all the backbenchers, understand that indirect taxes under the present Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) have moved from \$10 billion to \$20 billion? Do those people understand what that means to a working man and a man on pension?