

addressing themselves to the serious housing problems in Canada. I could carry on but, in view of the fact that others of my colleagues would like to contribute, I will leave it at that.

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg South Centre): Madam Speaker, on rising to speak on Bill C-215 presented by the hon. member for York West (Mr. Fleming) I cannot help but emphasize the cost involved. At a time of rampant inflation, and excessive and uncontrolled government spending, we should be bringing in bills with ideas to cut down on government expenditure. As the previous hon. member has stated, the cost of the proposal in this bill would be fantastic. Clause 1 of the bill states in part:

Wherever, in the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation Act, or in any other statute of Canada or in any regulation, order, deed, contract, lease or other instrument, the words "Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation" appear . . . there shall be substituted therefor the words "Habitat Canada".

Just imagine the fantastic cost involved in carrying out this suggestion at every CMHC office across Canada. I have just received some translation cost figures in respect of one airport tower at the new Mirabel airport. The cost involved there in a similar change is \$1.6 million. Costs are astronomical in respect of name changes. Just imagine the cost of changing all the fancy gold lettering on all the office doors across the country.

It would seem to me that, as a result of this proposed change, considerable confusion would develop. Canadians are used to seeing CMHC on the letterhead of this corporation and on its office buildings. If the name were changed to Habitat Canada they would perhaps think that CMHC had moved or that they were in the wrong building. I am sure there would be a tremendous amount of confusion.

The abbreviation of this corporation's full name is not difficult, and it is one that Canadians have been accustomed to for years. There has been no problem with such abbreviations as CMHC, CPR, CNR and others.

I would be happier had the hon. member brought forward a bill with some ideas to correct the many housing problems in this country. When one reads the recent statistics released in respect of housing he will see where the real problem lies. This is the sort of thing to which the hon. member should be directing his attention.

Let me state my reasons for suggesting that hon. members should be concerned about housing in Canada. House building activity continued to decline in October. The seasonally adjusted annual rate of housing starts for all areas dropped to 173,700 units during the month as compared to 192,500 units in September and 206,600 units for the third quarter of this year. One can see the seriousness of our housing problem with housing starts dropping at that rate.

Another interesting sidelight is the number of new homes which cannot be sold. Many Canadians are trying to find homes but cannot manage to obtain CMHC mortgages. Interest rates are way out of line, yet there are thousands of housing units sitting empty. This is where the real problem lies. I do not believe there should be a priority at this time in respect of changing the name of any government department, agency or corporation. We

Oil and Petroleum

should be finding ways and means of cutting down on government expenses. More concentration should be placed on providing housing at reasonable cost with lower mortgage interest rates.

There is a great deal of confusion today in the housing industry. One prominent industry spokesman stated recently:

I wonder if the government's intent was to cajole house buyers to defer their purchases or to line up today at real estate offices.

There is little doubt that a supply increase is needed, particularly as it affects the lumber and construction industry. The finance minister's proposals as they relate to housing do little but reflect the naivety and uncertainty of the government's economic policies. On the one hand with the \$500 grant, the opening of high ratio mortgage loans and the reduction of the sales tax on building materials, the minister appears to be attempting to increase demand. On the other hand with the registered homeownership savings plan, it would appear that his aim is to defer demand.

It is too bad we cannot go back to the days of the Conservative government when anyone could buy a three bedroom bungalow with a down payment of \$350 to \$1,200. In those days bus drivers, truck drivers, clerks and others could afford to buy homes. This is where the real problem lies, not in respect of the changing of the name of government departments.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): The hour provided for the consideration of private member's business has now expired.

Perhaps the House would agree that we resume consideration of Bill C-32 in committee before calling it six o'clock.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

PETROLEUM ADMINISTRATION ACT

MEASURE RESPECTING THE ADMINISTRATION OF INTERPROVINCIAL, EXPORT AND IMPORT TRADE IN PETROLEUM AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

The House resumed consideration in committee of Bill C-32, to impose a charge on the export of crude oil and certain petroleum products, to provide compensation for certain petroleum costs and to regulate the price of Canadian crude oil and natural gas in interprovincial and export trade—Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale)—Mrs. Morin in the chair.

At six o'clock the committee took recess.

* * *

AFTER RECESS

The committee resumed at 8 p.m.