

consideration to changing these proposals before it is too late for some sectors of agriculture?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, at the meeting of cabinet with these organizations and, indeed, in the House, the Minister of Finance has repeatedly said that he had the power to make these changes if he found that they affected agriculture adversely. As the House knows from the budget, tariff cuts were brought in for a year but the government has power by order in council to make that period shorter.

**Mr. McCain:** That is too late.

**Mr. Speaker:** Orders of the day.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### NATIONAL HOUSING ACT

#### PROVISIONS RESPECTING NEIGHBOURHOOD IMPROVEMENT, REHABILITATION, OWNERSHIP, NEW COMMUNITIES, ETC.

The House resumed, from Thursday, March 15, consideration of the motion of Mr. Basford that Bill C-133 to amend the National Housing Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent).

**Mr. Broadbent:** Mr. Speaker, last evening—

**Mr. Speaker:** May we have order, please. The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby has the floor.

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby):** Mr. Speaker, as I was about to say, the central thrust of my comments last evening was that the program provided in the bill illustrates better than anything else the neglect of housing that this government and its Conservative predecessors have shown at the federal level since the second world war. The list of programs, the talk about the neighbourhood improvement program, new provisions for guaranty standards, the residential rehabilitation program, assisted home ownership and the co-op improvements clearly illustrate that we have had nothing since 1964 in terms of housing legislation and nothing of real significance since the National Housing Act was passed. When I tried to document at some length last night the extent and seriousness of the situation in Canada, I suggested that the reliance this government has shown in the past and the Conservative party before it, on the private financial institutions to meet the needs of housing in Canada has simply not been justified.

After all, the over-all objective is to provide homes for all Canadians, and particularly to meet the needs of average and low income Canadians. The kind of changes that have been introduced since the mid sixties by the government have not accomplished this. All they have done has

### *National Housing Act*

been to stimulate the growth of homes in total numbers; they have not solved the distribution problem. They have not assured that the homes have gone to the people who need them most. In fact they have gone to those Canadians in the top 20 per cent income bracket. What we need is a significant change in our financial institutions in particular to bring down interest rates and to ensure that money goes where it is needed in significant quantities.

I should like to comment briefly on four of the programs included in this bill. First of all, there is the neighbourhood improvement program. The New Democratic Party welcomes the new emphasis that the government apparently intends to place upon improving our neighbourhoods that could deteriorate and decline. Instead of continuing with their old program, which really amounted to bulldozing such communities out of existence, destroying the sense of community and historical continuity when they tended to move people hither and yon and replace the old residences with rather dehumanizing monstrous structures that did not meet the needs of the people who once lived in those areas, they have made changes in this new bill. We rather like that. We like the new emphasis which the minister referred to of concern with rebuilding and maintaining a sense of community in existing neighbourhoods.

We have two reservations, however. We are concerned that the required standards might impose an unacceptable burden of cost on those who can least afford it, such as, for example, pensioners and non-unionized workers in the larger cities. To this end we will be proposing amendments to clause 12 at the committee stage, the effect of which will be to remove any such burden from our pensioners and low income people who live in such neighbourhoods.

• (1210)

The second objection concerns provisions which, in effect, are escape clauses. We suggest that these will permit the unacceptable kind of bulldozing away of neighbourhoods that this program is supposed to eliminate. We suggest that clause 10 is an escape clause, and we were surprised to find that the minister had allowed it to remain in the bill. If our interpretation is correct, this clause will permit the kind of bulldozing that has gone on in the past to continue. We object to that most strenuously.

I should like now to turn to the residential rehabilitation assistance program. This provides for financial assistance for repairing residences. There is to be assistance of up to \$2,000 in forgivable loans per dwelling unit. Our first concern is that there should be no ceiling; there should not be a \$2,000 or a \$3,000 ceiling; there ought not to be any ceiling on the amount to be granted, in order to bring certain minimum standards into being in all affected areas across Canada. We believe that the cost of financing basic electrical systems, heating systems, plumbing and structural components of housing ought to be borne for those eligible under this program. Until these basic minimums are covered, there ought not to be a ceiling on the amount of money that is to be made available to people under this scheme. The amount that a borrower may borrow should be scaled to income. From our reading of the legislation, it is not clear that this is to be done. It has been suggested that it will be done, but we want to make