

**Mr. Maurice Harquail (Restigouche):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted, on behalf of the government party, to respond this afternoon to the motion calling for the establishment of an institute of human environmental studies. First, let me say this. We are in a period of restraint. Despite that, hon. members opposite propose motions in private members' hour calling for the expenditure of money. Is not that strange, considering that hon. members opposite plead that the government should cut costs here and there, and criticize expenditures on government programs? Notwithstanding such criticisms, an hon. member opposite presented the motion now before the House.

This afternoon I should like to address myself particularly to that part of this motion concerned with creating an environment which is likely to provide, among other amenities, adequate housing. First, Canadians by and large are adequately housed. There are individuals who need public help to obtain suitable housing and there are excellent programs in operation to help them. Legislation is now before parliament to make these programs even more effective. Canadians are, as a general rule, among the best housed people in the world. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we are not complacent about our accomplishments. Certainly we need to be continually striving to improve our housing stock and to anticipate our changing needs in the years ahead.

From what I have been able to discover, Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation is doing a very good job in its field. In so far as housing is concerned I do not see pressing need to create another institution, be it an institution of human environmental studies or any other. We should resist the temptation to create a brand new organization each time a new challenge appears on the horizon.

I should like to speak for a few minutes about the work being done under CMHC's demonstration and development program which is to ensure that housing and the community environment will adequately meet the needs of our present population and of generations to come. I am satisfied with government directives and policies relating to CMHC. We are concerned not only about bricks and mortar; our main concern is to meet the real needs of the people of this country. Canadians are concerned about the environment in which they live; they are concerned not just with their own individual houses; concern extends to their physical and social environment as well.

The demonstration and development programs are directed toward developing and demonstrating attractive and affordable alternatives in housing and community. The government hopes to share with the building industry the results of these demonstrations and development projects. The builders will have to produce these structures at market prices, which means fair prices, and we will see what the Canadian public feels about them.

We want to build communities that better meet the needs and aspirations of all Canadians. The Woodroffe demonstration project here in Ottawa is one example. This will be a new community of about 14,000 people on 425 acres of land. The first task, of course, is to find out what people want. They ultimately decide whether a community succeeds or fails. People should be brought into the planning process at the very beginning, to work with the designers and the various levels of government.

#### *Human Environmental Studies*

At Woodroffe there is already a citizens' program to provide for the participation of citizens in the surrounding area affected by the project and for that of future residents or their representatives. A forum has been established to help identify and resolve controversial issues which might otherwise hold up the planning process. The object of these programs is to provide people with a satisfying environment and with the full range of possibilities for enhancing the quality of their lives.

Woodroffe will demonstrate that a totally planned community is better than piecemeal development. It will set standards for improvement of social, physical and economic arrangements for community development. CMHC will underwrite the pre-development and research costs. CMHC will be the developer and will use whatever techniques are necessary to build successfully. Then the corporation will transfer the ideas, products, and knowledge gained, providing an incentive to the building industry in this country to follow suit.

This work concerns the whole realm of human settlements in the suburbs as well as inner city. It concerns rural areas, new communities and metro satellites, and the aim is to improve living conditions. One of the objects is to reduce the pressure on the suburbs where, at present, most housing development takes place, and to restore balance in access, distribution, and choice of housing in urban as well as rural areas.

CMHC is examining ways to revitalize the inner city by recycling old buildings such as warehouses for residential and related uses. It is continually searching for alternative solutions to housing needs which will provide variety in order to broaden choice of housing accommodation and ensure sensible use of available physical resources. For example, it is studying the feasibility of building housing and community facilities over existing shopping centres.

At present the choice of housing accommodation is too limited. At one extreme we have low density single family housing eating up the land. At the other extreme we have high rise, high density housing developments. There is little doubt that between these two extremes there is an opportunity to build medium density accommodation, and CMHC is trying to fill this gap by developing new housing forms to increase choice, provide more amenities and save on land, services, and agricultural land.

As I said when I began, we are in a period of restraint. I am surprised that an hon. member opposite would introduce a motion asking the government to involve itself in the control of environment right across this country. If the motion were to succeed we should be forced to assume a substantial financial burden. Members on the government side are only too familiar with the attitude of opposition members who criticize and attack the government for spending money in the carrying out of various programs and policies the government has adopted.

I feel that existing government institutions, including CMHC, the ministry responsible for urban affairs, and DREE, are effectively improving and managing our built-up environment. I share the concern which is evident in the motion about the preservation of our living places but cannot support the motion because I feel that the institute which it proposes to establish would be an inappropriate and unnecessary response.