

Adjournment Debate

of financial institutions, in view of the great similarity of services offered by these various institutions under the new policy. The adequate and timely disclosure of service charges and other terms and conditions to consumers of financial services is a major protection measure which not only serves the interest of consumers but contributes also to a greater efficiency and competitiveness within the Canadian financial system.

HOUSING—CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING—1986 STATISTICS—
ENQUIRY WHETHER PROGRAM WILL BE AMENDED

Mr. David Berger (Laurier): Mr. Speaker, all is not sweetness and light with the federal Government's co-operative housing programme. The Minister admitted as much in his answer to the question I put to him in December. The House will recall that at the time, I raised the problem of participation by low-income families. Only families with an income of less than \$18,000 are eligible for the rent supplement that would give them access to co-operative housing programmes. The rent supplement is a subsidy to ensure that a family does not pay more than 25 per cent of its income on accommodation. However, Mr. Speaker, families whose incomes exceed \$18,000—not a spectacular amount, you will agree, since it is the minimum wage—are not eligible for the Conservative Government's rent supplement.

This means that families with incomes between \$18,000 and \$24,000, the traditional clientele of co-operative housing, are excluded from the programme and cannot even consider the co-operative formula because they would be obliged to pay about 35 or 45 per cent of their gross income on housing costs, which means their remaining income would be totally inadequate to cover the family's other needs.

Mr. Speaker, on December 9 and 10 of last year, press conferences were held in 12 Canadian cities across this country under the auspices of the Cooperative Housing Foundation of Canada. I want to stress the demands made by FECHIM, the *Fédération des coopératives d'habitation de l'Île de Montréal*, with particular emphasis on the aspect I referred to earlier. These housing co-operatives are asking for additional assistance or a rent supplement for low-income families which would have to spend more than 25 per cent of their income on rent.

I have received about 20 letters from housing co-operative residents in my riding. I think the Parliamentary Secretary has received some as well. Mr. Speaker, the Minister must take action. He cannot ignore this problem, and I hope the Parliamentary Secretary will have some news for us in his speech.

[English]

I would also like to raise another problem relating to co-operative housing, that is the problem of the Cloverdale housing project in the riding of Dollard, which is the riding of the Minister of State for Immigration (Mr. Weiner). This project has had a very sad history. It is made up largely of residents who are senior citizens, single mothers and welfare

recipients. The project previously belonged to a non-profit organization but the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation cancelled its subsidy on New Year's Eve 1986 because the non-profit organization had not submitted reports *en bonne et due forme*. The project was sold to a private developer on New Year's Eve. Because it is now owned by a developer, the rent subsidies that the residents of the co-operative received for many years are at risk of being eliminated. Furthermore, the sale prevents the residents from turning the project into a co-operative.

• (1815)

The members of Cloverdale Park have called for a public inquiry into the dealings between the former owner of the project and CMHC. They have called for expropriation and transfer of ownership of the project to a co-operative. They have asked that the subsidies that will be saved by the Government of Canada be set aside for new housing co-operatives in the neighbourhood.

I fully support the demands of the residents of the Cloverdale project. I say that a public inquiry is the only method by which the many questions that have arisen out of a project to which many residents have devoted time, sweat and efforts for many years to try to gain some modicum of control over their housing situation will be answered. I believe that their efforts should be supported by the Government which should respond to the request of the residents for a public inquiry and to facilitate by every means possible the efforts of the residents of this project to establish a housing co-operative.

[Translation]

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism): Mr. Speaker, I am also anxious to answer the Hon. Member's question, and I welcome this opportunity to do so, because this has also been a concern in my own riding, since the new system we have now is fairly complex and rather difficult to understand.

Mr. Speaker, I may point out that it is clear from the Hon. Member's remarks he has a poor understanding of the co-operative housing program, which is not really surprising because it is a pretty complex one, and I am delighted with this opportunity to describe the main points of the program and thus provide some clarification of the situation. Unfortunately, since we are not given as much time as the Opposition, I may not be able to answer all these questions, but perhaps I could provide some details on the Cloverdale project.

Hon. Members will probably recall the thorough scrutiny of Canada's housing policy that was initiated in 1985. This was done with the co-operation of all levels of Government, the housing industry and various interest groups including the Co-operative Housing Foundation of Canada. Subsequently, the Government revised all social housing programs in order to channel financial resources to those who are most in need. That was not the case before 1985. We are now helping far