

paying for until the government comes forward with proposals based on more sound principles. I can assure hon. gentlemen opposite that there will definitely be an election sooner than later. I can tell them now that the Canadian people will not stand for a government that lets weeks go by and proposes nothing, except trying to buy-off sectors of the community. I can assure hon. gentlemen and ladies opposite that that cannot be allowed to continue. Those of us on this side will do our best vigorously to ensure that the Canadian electorate, and people who cannot see through these schemes as quickly as they should at times, are kept well informed. It all bodes very ill for the government, but sadly for the Canadian people.

We are now in the opposition. Some of us like myself were quite a few years over on the other side, longer than will be some members there now.

An hon. Member: That is what you think.

Mr. Stollery: We think that Canada is a great country that requires coherent government. Just because we are not in government does not mean that we do not want to see Canada governed well. We want to see Canada have a government that has some ideas and things to offer the Canadian people. This is the great tragedy that we are living through. I can only hope that this tragedy does not continue any longer.

Mr. Bob Ogle (Saskatoon East): Mr. Speaker, I hope that I will be able to put into concrete terms many of the suggestions that were made in the last speech and use another style to present them.

● (1610)

We are in a very serious situation. I wish to begin my remarks on Bill C-22 by situating the debate on this legislation within the broader issue of providing decent housing and adequate living standards for all Canadians. Surely everyone here agrees that shelter is a fundamental human need, and therefore in a society as blessed with material resources as ours it should be a fundamental social right of all our citizens. It is incumbent upon governments at all levels to see that this human right of Canadians is respected and acted upon. That that has not been the case in the past is all too apparent to anyone who opens his or her eyes and ears. I hope that we can discuss these problems and their solution with open minds and hearts.

We do not need a recital of statistics to know that there are still many Canadians who do not enjoy the quality of housing to which those of us more fortunate are accustomed. We need only visit and talk to people in the north, on Indian reservations, in our inner cities and depressed regions to know that this is so. In Canada right now there are millions of people living in substandard housing, millions who are having great difficulty bearing the carrying of operating costs on their homes, and still millions of others who are having to give up their dream of owning their own home.

I am not saying there has been no progress in housing production in recent decades. It is certainly true that Canada

comes off very well when compared to conditions in countries in the Third World, conditions with which I am personally familiar. I would like to speak for a moment to the type of housing in which most of the world now lives.

In the area of South America where I spent a number of years of my life, northeast Brazil, the standard house was the kind of house that most people now on this planet have as their house. It is literally made out of sticks and mud with a thatched, palm leaf roof, lacking what we call the basic necessities of what makes it possible to live a human life. It is a dwelling with a mud floor, without furniture, bedding, water or sanitation, and by its very nature is a trap for disease. It is a dwelling with rats, lizards and insects.

I wish to give a case in point to illustrate this reality. For many of the people in that area their house was literally a death trap. When the mud dries on the walls, there is a little insect called the barbeiro which crawls into the cracks in the mud walls. At night it comes out and bites those who are there. The next day these people do not know they have been bitten. However, the insect has deposited in their very bodies the seeds of death. It is a kind of fluke, a little bug that travels through the bloodstream and finally ends up in the heart. It eats out the interior of the heart and ten to 12 years after the person has been bitten, he withers away and dies.

I make this point now not because there is this type of bug in Canada but because one of my colleagues who now works in the inner section of Montreal told me that, on returning to Canada after working with me for six or seven years in northeast Brazil, he was surprised there was such a similarity between the housing for the poor in Montreal and the housing for the poor in northeast Brazil. Canadians must remember that these kinds of miseries exist in our midst.

It is true that in Canada we have succeeded in building a large housing industry, but we have done much less in seeing to it that the benefits from this increase in enterprise and production are available to everyone at a reasonable and affordable cost as a matter of social right. Moreover, while governments, federal and provincial, have sought to assist and stimulate this industry through various tax and fiscal measures, through programs and agencies bearing a plethora of acronyms such as HUDAC, AHOP, MURB, CHIP, GPM, NIP, RRAP—so many words have been put together to disguise some mode of acting that it is almost like having to learn a new language—these programs have done much less well at ensuring that these budgetary measures, programs and agencies were in fact meeting the real housing needs of people, in particular the needs of low income earners or those who are, through no fault of their own, unable to support themselves and are those with special needs. Here I would mention the handicapped, students, pensioners, new immigrants, native people, people in the far-flung communities of the north and in remote, outlying areas. Let us take to heart that these are Canadians, people who live among us, our brothers and sisters who live in a situation that should not be tolerated in our country.