

*Adjournment Debate*

given the fact that what the House is really doing now is dealing with the former government's own bill. It is like spanking your mother; it is not supposed to be done.

**Mr. Lefebvre:** If the Minister of Finance (Mr. Crosbie) has learned anything tonight and he makes a commitment, he will see that his clowning days are over. Now that he is in a responsible position, he should start acting as such.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. We are already proceeding with the adjournment motion and perhaps the House would allow the hon. member for Mercier (Mrs. Hervieux-Payette) to speak to the question before us this evening.

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## PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*Translation*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

### CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION—INQUIRY WHETHER UNDERPRIVILEGED WILL BENEFIT FROM HOUSING POLICY

**Mrs. Céline Hervieux-Payette (Mercier):** Mr. Speaker, I come back to a question I put in the House, last Friday, to the minister in charge of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (Mr. MacKay). When I asked him for information of the Matthews task force report, he answered that the report would be politically neutral and objective because Mr. Matthews had married his daughter to a Liberal. I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, but I cannot accept that as a serious answer to so important a question. I therefore ask the minister, this evening, when he will release that report and what groups were heard, since I asked Friday who on the task force or what groups spoke on behalf of the humble people, and not in favour of both contractors and big business? I have heard rumors, Mr. Speaker, to the effect that the minister intended to change the president of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, very persistent rumors indeed which are working havoc again in Quebec and continue the witch hunt about political appointments in senior positions within Crown corporations. Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister whether the incumbent president has completed his term and fulfilled his mandate with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, or else whether he is leaving to make room for a future president from Quebec.

[Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton).]

Rumor has it that Mr. Mario Beaulieu would be offered the job. I ask the minister whether he could confirm that Mr. Beaulieu will be the next president of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. From there on, one obviously wonders whether the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation will remain as we now know it today.

I should like to go back briefly on the important role played by the CMHC on the social, economic and national level. We in the Liberal party recognize that for many years, together with the private sector, the government has developed a housing policy which is endorsed by OECD as one of the best in the world.

● (2205)

It enabled low-income families as well as senior citizens to find decent housing, even if this task is not quite over. It also made it possible to draft national standards guaranteeing the quality of construction in Canada. In this respect, Mr. Speaker, the possible elimination of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation makes me wonder about the necessity for the National Building Code. As you know, enormous efforts and intensive negotiations have taken place to standardize building materials as much as possible. Would it not be possible that the disappearance of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation would create even more regional disparities and increase building costs by eliminating the important function of the National Building Code?

We should remember that the corporation was created in 1946 to administer the National Housing Act. Its responsibility was to co-ordinate and support housing programs after some very gloomy years. At that time we had been through a depression. Now we have a recession and I think that the role of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation is even more crucial now than at any other time in the last ten years.

As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, there is still much left to do in the social housing field. About 400,000 Canadians have yet to find decent housing. What are we going to do in the absence of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation if we place the faith of those 400,000 Canadians in the hands of the private sector? I believe that it is in conjunction with the government that we can elaborate a national housing policy.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation did a tremendous job. Let me recall, Mr. Speaker, that in 1950 it had some 2,000 employees. In 1978, some 30 years later, it had 3,800 employees to serve all of Canada. Realizing that the corporation manages \$10 billion and that some three million houses are covered by its services, I feel it is very well managed and for this reason it should remain a basic tool of development for our economy.

As you may know, the previous government channelled private funds, integrating as it did the role of private enterprise with that of government. On the other hand, housing policy