

The Budget—Mr. Nystrom

corporations if these resources are put under public ownership. That is the heavy handed approach of 1984, Mr. Speaker, and should not be considered. A quicker move toward public ownership and control of exhaustible resources would be better for the people of this country, and the minister should not impede any such action.

A couple of other things in the budget warrant comment, Mr. Speaker. A major part of it dealt with housing. We all know that housing starts are down from 269,000 in 1973 to an adjusted figure of 173,000 in 1974. This is due to excessively high mortgage rates and the inflated cost of land and building materials. A new home is now out of reach of most middle and low income Canadians. The slowdown in the housing industry is causing lay-offs in the lumber and forest industries in parts of the country. Despite those facts, however, what does the budget offer to the person who wants to buy a home?

First of all, the minister says that person can have a \$500 home builder's grant. As the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas) said the other day, giving a grant of \$500 for building a house nowadays is like throwing a peanut to a starving elephant. It means nothing.

Second, there is the registered home ownership savings plan. I have already commented on that.

Next there is the lowering of the sales tax on building materials, but with no mechanism to monitor whether that saving will go to the home builder or the consumer. Often any potential saving is gobbled up by the middle man in the private sector. My party has always supported the removal of the sales tax on building materials, but only if the saving is passed along to the home builder, or if he is given a rebate in the form of a tax grant. The tax saving should not filter back to the private entrepreneur.

● (1630)

We should treat housing as a social right and remove it from the private, speculative market. The minister has not done this. Instead, by allowing private entrepreneurs tax exemptions on certain income, no matter what its source, he hopes to encourage the building of apartment blocks. The owners will probably charge usurious rents, and tenants will be without protection. That being so, I say that housing should be considered as a social right, in the same way as education and medical care are treated as social rights, and should not be left to the vagaries of the private market or in the hands of the private entrepreneur.

We should pump hundreds of millions of dollars into subsidized public housing, to make life tolerable for low income people. Banks, financial institutions and insurance companies should be told that they must allocate a certain part of their investment capital for mortgages, at interest rates as low as, say, 6 per cent. The government has not done this. We must do it if we are to treat housing as a social right equally available to each and every Canadian.

Other members of my party will comment on other aspects of the budget during the budget debate. I am concerned about the cost of living and about the failure of the Minister of Finance and of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) to wrestle inflation to the ground. The budget does not attempt to do that. It contains nothing of benefit for the ordinary citizen although inflation contin-

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ues to run at between 11 per cent and 12 per cent a year in Canada. The minister predicted that inflation would run at about 10 per cent, and the current level of unemployment is probably higher than last year's level.

The time has come for the government to control inflation in this country. We should establish a prices review board, with expanded jurisdiction to review all prices and price inputs, and with power to order the rollback of excessive profits or excessively high prices, which I am sure the board would reveal.

We must also extend the two-price system, which presently applies to wheat, oil and copper, to all basic commodities, including iron ore, steel and lumber. Only by doing such things can we hope to ease the rate of inflation in this country and insulate ourselves from international inflation. This we are not doing at present.

I notice that the budget does not deal with agriculture. The word "farmer" does not even appear in the budget speech. We all know of the difficult time the beef industry is going through.

Mr. Gillies: The difficulties were created by the government.

Mr. Nystrom: And we know of the difficulties that cow-calf operators are going through.

Mr. Gillies: Again, these are difficulties created by the government.

Mr. Nystrom: The Minister of Agriculture gave this House a commitment that the government would soon establish a policy for beef. Where is the policy? What has happened to his commitment? The budget ought to have included a financial commitment to keep the beef industry, including the cow-calf industry, healthy and in operation. Further, the budget does not mention allocations of funds for a farm stabilization program, and does not mention increased aid for countries whose peoples are starving.

It is wrong for the government not to contribute at least 1 per cent of our gross national product in foreign aid and not to contribute food from Canada to the peoples of the world who are starving. There ought to have been such a commitment in the budget; its omission is immoral. We are being immoral if we do not produce as much food as we can to help needy people in this country and the millions who are starving all over the world.

My colleagues will elaborate on my party's position as the budget debate continues. In view of the shortcomings of the budget, a budget which is not of significant benefit to ordinary people, and in view of the continued rise in the cost of living and continued handouts to the wealthy and to the corporations of this country, I wish to move a subamendment to the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition.

I move, seconded by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent):

That the amendment be amended by changing the period at the end thereof to a semicolon, and by adding immediately thereafter the following words: "and for failing to provide any significant tax benefit for low and middle income Canadians while granting unwarranted tax concessions to upper income Canadians and corporations."