

in the House and to CMHC that in so far as I and the government are concerned, it is the social right of Canadians to have decent housing at a price they can afford. I indicated that was the position of the government when I put this bill forward; and of course it continues to be the objective of the government, one that we will seek to achieve through this bill and through other measures.

All I want to say is that I hope we can pass this bill—I know this is also the objective of the hon. member for Calgary North—so that together with other measures it can begin to make a contribution toward solving some of our housing problems. This bill makes a very positive contribution to solving some of those problems and to assisting low-income people in their purchase of housing. It is of positive assistance to land assembly schemes and to the repair and rehabilitation of substandard housing. It is a positive contribution to the development of new techniques in housing and in community development.

These measures are important, and I think that hon. members in the Progressive Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party have recognized the contribution which this bill has made and can make toward solving those problems. They have recognized that in committee and in the debate today. All I want to say is that I hope we can deal with the amendments which the hon. member has moved, which the government supports and accepts, and then get on with passing the bill so that all those who are concerned that Canadians be properly housed can have the act implemented as quickly as possible.

● (2030)

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): As usual, Mr. Speaker, I find the minister's speeches, whether dealing with interest charges or other aspects of housing, very interesting. However, he did not really deal with the substance of what is at issue in these amendments. That concerns the right, the legitimacy, the appropriateness of the government in charging borrowers of funds from CMHC an interest rate well in excess of the cost of administering the law. The practice has been to charge substantially more to the borrower than CMHC is paying for the money it lends.

Before the introduction of this bill there might have been some justification for that course, because there was not specific provision in the legislation to cover administrative costs. But there is provision in virtually every clause of this bill touched on by amendments Nos. 3, 5, 9 and 11 proposed by the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams), and my amendments Nos. 4, 6, 10 and 12. The hon. member for Calgary North wants to set a substantial limit on what the government can charge people for administrative costs. We say there is no justification for any difference being made between what the government is paying for its money and what it charges CMHC. I stress that all this has to do with administrative costs.

In other provisions of the bill we stipulate that we will provide CMHC with administrative money to cover its operations. If we are doing that in one part of the legislation, why duplicate it in another part? Why do we stipulate that an additional charge in this instance must be paid by the borrower? Why should we levy this cost on the

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consumer, in this case the person who borrows from CMHC?

Under the government's original proposal we would charge him 1 per cent, which on a \$25,000 mortgage amounts to \$250. If we accept the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Calgary North, and there is an indication that the government will accept it, that \$250 charge will be reduced to \$125. I concede that to a borrower this means a saving of \$125 but again I ask, why should there be any additional charge? If it can be reduced from \$250 to \$125, why can't it be reduced to zero? I do not think there is one shred of justification for this additional charge.

There is another point I wish to make. Members of the Conservative Party in this parliament, and in previous parliaments, have raised the question of parliamentary supervision of government spending, citing many instances where we have lost control of effective checks, particularly on administrative expenditure. If those members accept our line of reasoning, which earlier today the hon. member for Calgary North acknowledged was in line with their own reasoning, why can they not take the further step and draw the logical conclusion that there should be no gap between what the government borrows money at and what it charges the person receiving a CMHC loan? We failed in the committee with an amendment, but the Conservative Party on this issue is showing marvellous intelligence and sensitivity to the well-being of the people of Canada. I ask them to accept the logic of their own argument, which dictates cutting out the gap altogether and reducing the charge to zero.

Earlier the hon. member for Calgary North said he was in agreement with what I am saying. We are in agreement with his argument, but the tactical decision he made was based on a minority government situation, believing he could persuade the government to cut the charge in half and saying that half a loaf is better than none. I tell him that the minority government situation gives him a clear alternative to that approach, which is to support the NDP proposal which would cut out the charge entirely. If the Conservative Party and the NDP join forces on this issue, we will defeat the government's proposal and what we want in this case will become part of the law of Canada.

Therefore I move, seconded by the hon. member for Toronto-Lakeshore (Mr. Grier):

That the amendment be amended by deleting therefrom the words "by more than one half of one per cent"

The effect of this amendment to the amendment is, of course, what I am proposing in amendment No. 4. I conclude by appealing once again to the Conservative Party to really implement their own arguments presented earlier by supporting this amendment to the amendment.

● (2040)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. In looking at the amendment moved by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) the Chair has some reservations which are more on the procedural aspect than on the contents of the motion itself. The hon. member just said that his amendment to the motion of the hon. member