

Housing

government has, in effect, already set aside the recommendation of its own Economic Council which calls for a continuing rise in the number of housing units being constructed.

So this announcement, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, means nothing. It will do nothing to correct the shortage of housing. In effect it underlines the truth of something the opposition has been saying for the last three or four years, that this government has no housing policy. We have no idea of its aims in this field, or of the amount of housing Canada needs, or where it is to be located or how people can afford to pay for it, or where the necessary finance will be obtained. Housing is treated merely as a tap to be turned on and off for the purpose of producing employment or economic expansion. There are no goals. There are no objectives. There is no housing program under this government.

But maybe it does not matter that a lot of our people are inadequately housed or lacking proper facilities. I suppose the really important thing is to get back to the basic national objective of this parliament; back to the spies charging each other, the character assassinations and the old personal feuds and vendettas.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, at the end of September 1965, the Department of Trade and Commerce issued a press release in Ottawa announcing that the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation had decided to finance a housing project in Great Britain. It was announced that over a hundred houses would be built in Great Britain and financed by the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation of Canada.

Today, it is announced that Central Mortgage and Housing have no more money to lend to Canadians. In Great Britain, everything is fine, but restrictions are being applied in Canada. Furthermore, the minister says that the house builders should not expect the government to solve their problems for them. But the problems have been brought about by the government. The government placed an 11 per cent tax on building materials. The government have brought on the problems now facing the building industry.

After the government have created problems, they wash their hands of them. They say they will not solve "your problems" and

the minister adds that such a program would go directly against the government's objectives—I repeat "would go against the government's objectives in restraining the level of construction." The government's objectives are to restrain the level of construction.

We are told that Canada is a progressive country, a developing country; we are told that the future belongs to Canada and to Canadians but, on the other hand, we are told that one of the objectives of the government is to restrain the level of construction. To what purpose? To prevent progress in Canada. If the country is developing, why are efforts being made to halt this development?

The government cannot be censured too much for seeking to restrain construction in a country as young and as wealthy as ours. No, the government will never be blamed as much as they deserve for that. Besides, it is an inevitable result of the last budget of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) who prefers to restrain the economy of the country rather than to progress along with it.

[English]

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, within the framework of what has been stated government policy I suppose the statement that has just been given to us by the Minister of Labour offers some little hope; but I must reiterate what has already been said, that it certainly is not adequate to meet the needs of the country. It is quite contrary to the recommendations of the Economic Council, which stated that the number of housing units should continue to increase not only to meet the needs of the economy but also to meet the needs for housing.

The very acute situation that exists in Canada, more so in some parts of the country than in others, so far as the shortage of mortgage money is concerned, does not arise because there is not a sufficient money supply. It is simply because of government policy. It is government policy today that is creating the shortage of funds.

We agree with the Minister of Labour that at this time it is not the government's responsibility to supply money for speculative capital, but the fact is that the private source of capital is not there any more, the money just is not available. It is for that reason that this sector of the house building industry is not going forward as in previous years.

The minister's statement is entirely inadequate to meet the needs of the country with