concept does not pay off or even if there is a significant delay before government revenues recover, then a larger federal deficit would be unavoidable. The consequences would be more inflation and further depreciation of the Canadian dollar.

We in opposition are concerned about the fiscal responsibility of the Government of Canada, and I am sure hon. gentlemen across the way share this concern. To place a program of this kind before Parliament in present circumstances seems to me rather ridiculous. On the one hand, the government talks about restraint and belt tightening, and on the other it is proposing to spend $2.87 billion with no explanation of where the money is coming from.

What about the American experience? As we know, an all-party committee went down to Washington to look into the system there and find out whether it could be used here, whether it would be worthwhile. The information I had from the members when they came back was that we should avoid this kind of program at all costs. Well, we are to have it anyway. The comments of Mr. Richard Pomp, an associate professor of law at the University of Connecticut School of Law, are important in this connection. He said:

Although international comparisons are not always meaningful Canadians should find it curious that despite these deductions the home ownership rate in the United States is virtually the same as in Canada.

I believe the Prime Minister has acknowledged that the mortgage plan, once established will be difficult to reverse. This aspect seems to be in conflict with the idea of sunset legislation proposed by the Minister of State (Treasury Board). I note that in an article which appeared in *The Ottawa Journal* on November 28, the following appears:

Minister of State Perrin Beatty, who is preparing the legislation, said yesterday Parliament could terminate or drastically change programs after they had been reviewed.

What about Canada's housing situation? Once again I want to quote from Professor Richard Pomp. He says there would really be no increase in home ownership whatsoever as a result of the introduction of this kind of legislation.

A study carried out recently by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development reached the conclusion that Canadians were the best housed people in the industrial world. A Gallup poll conducted just before the election of May 22 indicated that Canadians were well housed; over 80 per cent of the people who responded to the questionnaire said they were satisfied with their present housing situation.

Mr. Chairman, I have touched on a number of areas which concern me with regard to this bill. I was prepared to look at it favourably during the election period; I felt that this mortgage deductibility concept might be acceptable within certain limits. However, at the present time, the economic situation being what it is, I believe it is untimely and would benefit only a few at the expense of many. Without doubt it is a seductive sales pitch to voters, but throwing money at a problem has never been a satisfactory answer. I hope the government will consider very carefully the amendments which are to be submitted. I will only say in conclusion that Canada cannot afford this expensive program at this time.

Mortgage Tax Credit

Mr. McDermid: Would the hon. member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore accept a question? If the government is so irresponsible in presenting this bill, would the hon. member tell me why the housing critic for his party, the hon. member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry, has suggested it be extended to include renters and other groups?

Mr. Robinson (Etobicoke-Lakeshore): Mr. Chairman, the hon. member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry will be quite prepared, I am sure, to answer that question when he gets back to the House. I do not pretend to speak for my hon. friend from Winnipeg-Fort Garry.

Miss Nicholson: I want to address clause 1 briefly, Mr. Chairman. There are many social as well as economic reasons why as a matter of public policy a government might wish to encourage home ownership; it contributes to the stability of neighbourhoods and helps citizens have a stake in their country. But this bill does nothing to help young families buy a home. It does nothing for renters and therefore does nothing to assist people at the time they are trying to save money to buy a home. It does not address the question of the affordability of homes, in particular the very high interest rates which buyers are now facing as result of present government policy. Except for a limited credit in respect of property tax, it does nothing for those who have already paid for their homes—for example, senior citizens who are struggling to maintain themselves in their own homes on fixed incomes.

I voted against the bill on second reading because it is a poorly designed piece of legislation which does not stimulate home ownership or construction.

• (1700)

During this committee stage we will be coming forward with a number of motions to try to improve the bill and rid it of some of its most obvious inefficiencies and inequities. We are limited in what we can do, however, by the rigidly intransigent attitude of the government, which is so sure it will be able to use its majority to pass the bill in its present form that it has already printed and distributed tax credit forms based on the bill as it now stands, even though the bill has not been passed by Parliament.

The Prime Minister complained in Vancouver recently that Liberals were obstructing this bill. The Prime Minister made his complaint three days after the second reading debate was begun. At that time six members of the official opposition had spoken on the bill. This government is showing an arrogance and a lack of respect for Parliament which are unmatched in our history.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Miss Nicholson: To print forms before a bill has even had second reading on the assumption it will not be amended, to complain because the bill is not rubber stamped and to complain after only six speeches—six thoughtful speeches, I might add, with a lot of constructive suggestions for change if the government had been disposed to listen to them—is surely very