

problem. In the past, the federal government refused to recognize the status of municipalities in the housing field. This was one of the breaking points that prompted the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer) to leave a Liberal government and join the Progressive Conservatives. I would have thought that the minister, after attending such tri-level conferences, would have been impressed by the logic of the arguments made at them, and would have readily accepted the sensible amendment put forward by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent).

As the hon. member has pointed out, if the bill is not amended non-profit organizations and co-ops will be permitted 100 per cent financing, and municipalities will only be permitted 95 per cent. The minister knows that municipalities have had difficulty raising funds. Now, he is placing a further impediment in their way, when they tackle housing problems. When I think of the amount of money he has allotted to municipalities for land banking, it really behooves me to attempt to persuade him at this time to take a more progressive view on this problem. I do not think he would like to be labelled as a person who is prohibiting the construction of housing across the country, as a person who is impeding the participation of municipalities in house construction. I hope he will take the initiative in showing municipalities his deep concern, and I would be most surprised if he votes against the amendment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I consider the amendment which we are now studying to be perfectly logical.

A great many municipalities are having great difficulty in obtaining the funds they need to carry out projects which they have been considering for a long time. I would like to draw the minister's attention to the fact that, more and more, municipalities, of as few as 1,500 or 2,000 souls, wish to build homes for the elderly. A number of such projects have in fact been started in my constituency, one of which is now well under way. Others are being studied, but the really serious problem is that of financing. I suppose that if the amendment under study were adopted it would enable the municipalities to build these homes for the elderly in more favourable conditions.

There is another factor which should not be lost sight of. It is that it is becoming more and more desirable to enable senior citizens to live in a kind of motel-housing, where they feel more at home, where they have the feeling that they are still living in their former residences, when they were fully active. This amendment has been designed to allow municipalities desirous of doing so to go ahead with this venture. There is, quite rightly, some anxiety as to what is to be done in the near future with senior citizens in the areas where it has been impossible to build residences earlier.

This is why I support the proposed amendment. I hope that it will be incorporated into the bill and that our municipalities will benefit by it.

National Housing Act

● (1600)

[*English*]

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this amendment has been set forth by my colleagues, the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) and the hon. member for Broadview (Mr. Gilbert). It is to encourage the municipalities to build rental housing projects by making it possible for them to borrow from Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation up to 100 per cent of the lending value of such rental housing projects.

Earlier, spokesmen for our party have pointed out that what we require—and this bill does not provide it—is a massive program of public housing to relieve the great shortage of homes for people in the middle and low income categories in this country. This amendment is an attempt to help do what the bill does not, which is to assist the group of people who really need housing and cannot get it except through public, low rental housing.

The government claims that the bill will help those on low incomes to buy their own homes. Many people would dearly like to do so; many in low rent housing projects would love to get away from what so many regard as ghettos of despair that brand them and their children as everlastingly doomed to failure. There is no way they can secure good, modern homes on the private market or indeed, for a good many of them, under the provisions of this amended bill without investing an impossibly large proportion of their income in the venture. The alternative, it seems to me, is to take steps to provide public housing on a much larger scale than at present, and to rescue it from the Cinderella status that past and present governments have given to it in this country.

European countries have been involved in public housing for many years, some projects in Britain going back to the nineteenth century. In most European countries, public housing is developed to meet acute housing shortages and to control the private housing sector. In Britain, according to Carleton University statistics, assisted housing accounts for 31 per cent of the total stock and in Sweden, for 40 per cent. In my own city of Vancouver, Canada's third and most rapidly growing city, a fairly recent survey made by the United Community Services concludes that present public housing stock is reaching only about one-tenth of the existing need in a worsening situation. Of the tenant sample, 93 per cent in the low rental housing have family income of less than \$5,000; over half of them have less than \$3,000 per family per year. The statement that, under the present bill, most people can buy their own homes is an invitation to disaster as far as the family budget is concerned. These people cannot do it, even under the provisions of the revised bill, and that is why we are offering this amendment. We want to encourage the municipalities to get busy and take up their full share of the load.

Public housing in Canada was conceived as an emergency measure and born of a war-time situation. It was never intended to provide more than boxes for beds, places where people in war industries could live. I will remember that the attempt to get the first meeting rooms for tenants at that time were strongly and successfully rebuffed by the minister then in charge of the matter. Public housing