

*National Housing Act*

fact that better houses are being built and greater care is being taken of them the life expectancy, if I may use that term, of a house is much longer today than in the past.

Through the years the former administration showed interest in this subject, gave leadership and was able through the corporation to lengthen the amortization period. That, of course, was in earlier days, but as I say I think the time has come when another look should be taken at this aspect. It is not my intention to further delay the procedure of this legislation. I know that other members will undoubtedly have something to say respecting other features of the bill.

(Translation):

**Mr. Gabriel Roberge (Megantic):** Mr. Speaker, I would not have taken part in this debate, had it not been for certain statements made in the house by the hon. member for St. Mary (Mr. Valade) on February 4 last, at the resolution stage.

The hon. member for St. Mary said at the time that housing credits had been frozen by the previous administration and then unfrozen by the Conservatives. Later on he added that the previous administration had neutralized those credits. Now, if I am not mistaken, when the act was first adopted in 1954, parliament voted \$250 million and, in 1957, according to data given out in the Minister of Public Works' first report, \$100 million had already been used, while the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation still had \$150 million on hand.

It is true that the present government did launch a new plan which the minister refers to as the "small home loan policy". He must be commended for this because it helped create jobs throughout the country.

The original purpose of the National Housing Act was to enable more Canadians to become home owners. And when the present government took over, the problem was still there and more homes still had to be provided. In fact the Minister of Public Works stated as much, as recorded on page 683 of the official record:

(Text):

At the time about \$100 million had already been used, and in view of the rapidly diminishing number of houses then being started and of the great need for homes for Canadians of moderate income, and also to help the housebuilding industry and to provide employment, we decided to use the remaining \$150 million then available primarily for the support of a new policy which we described as a small home loan policy.

[Mr. Garland.]

(Translation):

But, towards the end of the debate on the resolution, the minister shifts his ground and admits, or seems to admit, that the prime purpose of the government program now is to provide jobs. I quote a statement he made on February 20, 1959, as recorded on page 1243 of *Hansard*.

(Text):

The government went into the home financing field to such a large extent in the last two years for one reason, to provide employment. This was done deliberately as the very best means of creating jobs.

(Translation):

I am not at all blaming the present government or the Minister of Public Works for that statement because it is the truth, but before going on with my remarks I would like to examine the situation in the light of the statistics.

I have here the *Canadian Housing Statistics* published by the C.M.H.C. for the third quarter of 1958. If I refer to it, I find that as more public funds are being made available in the form of more C.M.H.C. loans, it seems that lending institutions are lending less. There is something odd about this and I think that the government and the C.M.H.C. should examine that aspect of the problem and find why less money is being loaned by individuals, by insurance companies, trust and loan companies and even banks, as more public funds are made available to the population.

According to table 17 of the statistical document I referred to a moment ago, in 1956 the insurance companies granted 21,756 loans for housing construction while the C.M.H.C. granted only 2,565 loans for the same period.

In 1957, insurance companies granted 8,905 loans while the C.M.H.C. granted 25,304; according to the report the situation is the same for the year 1958. In fact, whereas insurance companies—and not trust companies—granted loans for building of 1,762 houses during the first quarter, the Central Housing and Mortgage Corporation granted loans for 10,971 houses. For the second quarter, there is a discrepancy. At that time the picture changed, 6,371 loans being granted by insurance companies and only 5,157 by the C.M.H.C. But in the third quarter of 1958 conditions returned to normal, insurance companies granting 4,881 loans and the C.M.H.C. 11,112.