

is likely to decrease the amount of affordable housing for Canadians. It is estimated that we currently need approximately one million homes in Canada. If the Government were to establish a logical interest rate structure, without worrying about how much the banks and other financial institutions will make, it could instruct the banks to allot 10 per cent of loans for housing mortgages and they will receive 7 per cent of that. This was done for a number of years. We did that for a good number of years. If we did it again, the number of houses that would be built would be increased very quickly because people would begin to build their own homes or pay the construction industry to build their homes for them.

● (1750)

It is very sad that the financial structure of the country has become more important to this Government than the need for good, affordable housing. It is sad that banks and mortgage companies are more important to the Government than the need for good, affordable housing. Housing is a necessity. I am not even sure that banks are necessary.

When the Social Credit Party first came to power in Alberta, it was probably the first group of socially-minded people to tangle with the banks of Canada. At that time, members of that Government tried to put in place a system which would make use of the productivity and resources of Alberta and its people. They said that they did not need the banks and did not have to give 10 per cent or 20 per cent of their productivity away. They felt they could circulate the money with their own province and establish a financial structure which would be of benefit to Albertans rather than to large banks and financial corporations. The Aberhart Government passed what it thought was the required legislation which was then struck down by the Supreme Court of Canada. The Supreme Court would not allow the Aberhart Government to put in place a structure which would allow Albertans to use their own resources and their own productivity in the way they wanted.

Almost the same kind of thing is happening now. People who want to build a house and live in it cannot do so because the Government feels that we must not interfere with the ability of a bank to make money. There are many people in this country who are quite willing to begin to build houses and, with a little bit of help from the Government, they would do so. I am speaking of course of the large number of people who would like to start co-operative housing projects.

As well, there are a number of people in the country who are making war on that possibility. Builders' associations and other financially-based institutions have very strong lobbies that come to see Members of Parliament here in Ottawa to tell us that co-op housing should not be subsidized by the Government. Unfortunately, the Government is listening to that lobby and not to the millions who want affordable housing. The Government is listening to the banks and the mortgage companies, the companies that will make money on the buying and selling of houses. Consequently, the Government is not ready to allow co-operative housing projects to go ahead.

National Housing Act

Co-operative housing has proven its effectiveness by supplying the community-based and socially integrated housing that is necessary for the people who find it difficult to get together enough money to build a house. It has proved effective for those who do not want to spend \$80,000 on a house just to spend another \$160,000 on interest in the next 15 years. Rather, they would like to make a commitment to pay for that house. Under the circumstances which have been put in place by the Government and which the Government is keeping in place, those people will pay \$80,000 for a house and over the next 15 years will pay another \$160,000. They will pay for that house three times. The builder of the house will only receive \$80,000 but the person who has bought the house will pay for it three times. The Government is going along with that idea.

Housing is a necessity and a right, and it is something that we in this Parliament should stand up for as best we can and for as long as we can. Instead, we are discussing a Bill that does none of the things that are needed to increase available housing. It does none of the things that are needed to make it possible for those with lower incomes to buy houses. A few years ago, the Government, the Official Opposition and our Party made a commitment to the people of Canada that we would make affordable housing a major part of our platform and we have ceased to do so.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Order, please. Are there any questions?

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, there are two matters that came to my mind as I listened to my colleague explain his views on the Bill and the problems with housing. If I could, I would like to have him elaborate a little bit on both of those matters. I will put them to him one at a time so that I do not confuse anyone who may want to read his response in *Hansard* or, for that matter, anyone who may want to listen to his response today.

My colleague made mention of the fact that there was a desperate need to encourage the further utilization of co-operative housing as a way of improving the housing stock for Canadians who are of average income and find it most difficult to enter into the housing market as it now exists. I wonder if my colleague is aware of what now appears to be the fact that the Government of the day has reduced its emphasis on co-operative housing and that it now seems to be reducing the amount of money available to co-operative housing? From his own vast experience both here in Canada and abroad, I wonder if my colleague would be able to enlighten us as to how he feels co-operative housing could better serve the needs of that segment of the population that is now unable to qualify in the private housing market as a result of the high interest rates that have been charged?

Mr. Hovdebo: Mr. Speaker, not very long ago, I asked a question of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in the absence of the Minister of Public Works (Mr. LeBlanc). I asked him to explain why the Government had cut back on its allocations to co-operative housing and why it was not giving the people responsible for co-operative housing across the country the