

Supply

I welcome her support. Indeed, we have been endeavouring to have a quick debate so that legislation could move through quickly. I might note that if she can persuade her colleagues to stop filibustering on so many pieces of legislation that are before the House, we could get on with the real business of the nation and deal with amendments concerning fundamental issues like this.

Mortgage insurance will give more Canadians an opportunity to own a home. The changes we propose will assist people with very low downpayments to buy a house for the first time. The amendment we propose will allow Canadian homeowners to secure second mortgages at interest rates comparable to the first.

We all recall with some terror when first mortgages may have been 12 per cent or 14 per cent and second mortgages were 18 per cent to 24 per cent. It was obviously impossible for any young Canadian couple to purchase a home at those exorbitant rates. We are undertaking to ensure that a second mortgage is comparable to the first and the rate of interest charged by the mortgage or financial institution will be very much the same. Inevitably, one can conclude that more people will be able to buy houses at an affordable rate.

We are concerned with affordability. We recognize that there are some one million people in Canada who cannot secure a home appropriate to their needs. However, in the last two years this Government has been able to assist 107,000 new units of social housing through its RRAP or non-profit program. Approximately 50 per cent of the 107,000 people in the last two years have been able to obtain new accommodation through the non-profit program and the rest have been helped through the RRAP program. We have made tremendous strides, although there is more to do. What we are talking about now is leadership. We are talking about whether we have used the dollars available to us in an expeditious and appropriate way, getting the best value for our money.

• (1630)

One other facet of the changes we propose to the National Housing Act is to provide insurance for chattel mortgages. We are talking about insuring mortgages for mobile or manufactured homes. This is an area of housing policy which has perhaps been allowed to lapse for too long a period of time. We know that in other countries mobile homes and manufactured homes have provided substantial, comfortable and affordable accommodation for a great number of people who would not otherwise be able to call one place their home. We are going to ensure the purchase of new trailers. Previously people who wanted to buy a mobile home could not get financing from the standard financial institutions. They had to pay consumer rates of interest because loans for mobile homes were treated as consumer loans and too often the rates of interest were exorbitant and unaffordable. Our amendments will deal appropriately with that.

There are many facets of our successful housing program. Perhaps to give evidence of the merit of the proposed mortgage housing amendments, I would indicate a number of headlines. The headline in the *Toronto Star* on March 25, 1987, reads: "Mortgage Rule Change Helps Renters to Buy Homes". A headline in the *Ottawa Citizen* on March 25, 1987 reads: "Changes to Mortgage Insurance Fund Will Aid Home Ownership". The headline in the *Toronto Star* of May 14, 1988 reads: "Mortgage Backed Securities a Popular Investment Choice". That has nothing to do with our new amendments to the National Housing Act. It is a new scheme which has made available some \$600 million of new investment from the private sector. This will allow more funds in the mortgage market. It will provide more competition, leading to lower interest rates and longer term mortgages. Indeed, for the very first time last year we saw a return to 10 year mortgages. For too long a period of time we have only been able to have access to five year mortgages. It will provide stability, availability and more affordability for Canadians.

The headline in the *Ottawa Citizen* on March 25 reads: "Changes to Mortgage Insurance Fund Will Aid Home Ownership". The headline in the *Montreal Gazette* on April 15 read: "Housing Starts Rebound". The headline in the *Toronto Sun* on March 25, 1987, read: "Mortgage Rules Lauded". So, when my friend says this Government has abdicated leadership and is responsible for deterioration in the housing situation of Canadians, I can only say to her that I am prepared to rely on the objective evidence. I am prepared to rely on statistics and on the commentaries I have cited today. Unfortunately, I have consumed all of my time, but I would welcome any questions.

[Translation]

Mrs. Killens: Mr. Speaker, my first question is one that I already asked in the House some months ago about our not having a national law establishing responsibility for housing in Canada, such as exists in Australia and in England, for example.

I would like to know whether the Minister has already studied the two laws of both these countries, because I always come back to the apparent lack of coordination throughout the country for solving housing problems. I may have emphasized homelessness, but this problem has so many social consequences that I am very concerned about it. There are other problems as well that could be solved throughout the country if people talked to each other. For example, I have an article from *Le Soleil* of Quebec and another from *La Presse* of Montreal, in which Mayor Doré of Montreal deplores this lack of communication; the article says that the Doré administration is somewhat concerned. This refers to the \$2.5 million from the federal and provincial governments.

According to the article, the mayor is worried because the senior governments decided without consulting the city or the community groups working with the homeless. That is, Mayor Doré of Montreal said he was not consulted. It is true that