

Housing Prices

trial countries have been able to match. These achievements were the results of co-operation between private industry, financial institutions of all kinds and the implementation of the National Housing Act, which made an important, indeed an essential contribution.

Of the 190,000 housing units which were started during this period in Quebec, 113,500 represented a value of \$1,540 million and were made through the provisions of the National Housing Act; 62,500 represented a value of \$900 million in loans granted by the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation under agreements with the Quebec Housing Corporation.

As a member from Quebec and from a city ranking second in size and population, this is my opinion on the government's achievements. It seems to me that the federal government and the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation contributions to the Quebec Housing Corporation are unfortunately not well enough known and this is why I shall later bring up this subject again.

This figure applies only to housing units. We must add 22,500 hostel units mostly for the elderly and students. If the problem boiled down to housing starts and financing, our industry's capacity and our means would soon solve the issue—if it did exist as such. We do not intend to present it only as a matter of dimension.

The basic problem of housing in Canada stems from geographic and social distribution, so that low income people may benefit from proper housing to the same extent as those in higher brackets. One must also consider the capacity to pay. The National Housing Act and the activities of the CMHC were all directed toward correcting distribution disparities at all levels and in order to minimize the geographic and social disadvantages.

I find it very strange, Mr. Speaker, that this motion has been moved by a member of the official opposition, when one considers the present situation in the field of housing for low income people. As a matter of fact, the sum of \$306 million was made available to the provinces for public housing in 1971, compared with \$7.5 billion a year under the Progressive Conservative government from 1957 to 1963.

Let me correct that, Mr. Speaker, it was \$306 million made available to the provinces in 1971 by the present government and only \$7½ million a year by the Progressive Conservatives from 1957 to 1963.

So this government's performance is better than that of the previous one.

At the regional level, to the extent that, during some years, the activity of conventional lenders or lenders approved under the National Housing Act has decreased, that of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation has been greatest. During that period, the percentage of all housing starts financed in Quebec by the CMHC, either directly or under agreement with the Quebec Housing Corporation, was 30 per cent, which is higher than the national average.

In the developing regions which are of great importance, as far as the province's future is concerned, the part played by the Corporation, as regards mortgage loans, has been even more important. There are a few places—I am referring to Sept-Îles—where the only avail-

able loans are those granted by the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Another problem even more complicated than the matter of regional distribution is that of the social distribution of housing. The free market operations were leading us to a surplus of housing units for upper income citizens, and a serious shortage of housing for families in the middle or low-income brackets, in different parts of Canada, in particular in the province of Quebec.

As I said earlier, I do not intend to say that this problem no longer exists, but there is one field in which we are entitled to be proud of the government record, under the National Housing Act, namely, the building of two income housing.

Between 1968 and 1971, the orientation of the National Housing Act underwent an overall change. Between 1957 and 1967, commitments in the field of social housing loans and other programs designed for low income families amounted to an average of \$50 million, for a total investment of \$377 million; in 1971, the funds spent under these budget items totalled \$622 million, compared to a total investment of \$748 million. This means that the proportion of budgetary expenses allotted to social housing, as well as that of low income families, increased from 14 to 80 per cent.

Such a new orientation was not achieved only through instructions. In the field of housing, where the co-operation of all government levels as well as of industry is necessary, it could only be achieved through initiatives and experiences to which all of them took part. Under the federal program of \$200 million for the development of low income housing, \$72 million are paid to the province of Quebec.

• (1530)

In that respect, I had in my capacity as member for Laval to criticize some projects endorsed by the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and I refer to the famous project Les Abeilles. I also refer to the case of the Résidences Richelieu Inc.

But it is my duty today to point out the beneficial achievements of the CMHC in Laval, and on behalf of all those who were victim of Les Abeilles project I wish to thank the government authorities for having considered that problem and having understood the situation by providing the promoters of the project with an adequate solution which met their needs. Actually they were victim of unfortunate circumstances. When we considered the estimates referred to the Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs, I raised that question and the minister assured me that such situations will never arise again owing to implementation of different and much better controlled overseeing mechanisms.

In the field of family housing, the Corporation invested, either directly or under agreements with the Quebec Housing Corporation, \$153 million for senior citizen housing or special projects. I should like to point out the co-operation of the CMHC with the Quebec Housing Corporation at Ville de Laval where a home for the aged is now under construction; it will cost \$2,250,000. The contribution of the federal government will amount to \$2,137,500. The building will contain 210 beds.