

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

Kong in respect of the economic and trade situation in China.

With regard to having a representative of the Wheat Board in China, this would be a matter of Canadian Wheat Board policy and in due course we will see what it is. In the meantime, as is also known, the Wheat Board is in contact with potential buyers in China. Just recently the assistant chief commissioner of the Canadian Wheat Board, Mr. Lawrie was in Hong Kong where he met with an association called the Chinese Resources Commission or something like that, which represents the Communist Chinese government in wheat trade matters.

• (4:30 p.m.)

HOUSING—REQUEST FOR INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview): Mr. Speaker, on May 8 I directed a question to the Minister without Portfolio in charge of housing. In substance, the question asked the minister whether he would make any amendments to Bill C-192, the housing legislation which was recently introduced. I am very happy to see the minister take his place in the house, and I should like immediately to congratulate him on his appointment as minister responsible for housing. He did a very effective job in the department of Indian affairs, even though new legislation was not forthcoming. Nevertheless, he was at home in that department and his efforts in that regard may initiate action to help the Indian people. I hope the same will be true in respect of housing.

I do not have to recall the events in respect of the housing crisis. You will recall that during the election campaign in June of last year one of the platforms of the Liberal party was a massive housing program to meet housing needs in Canada. In September, because the crisis continued, this government set up a task force on housing. That task force reported in January of this year and we are anxiously awaiting action on the recommendations of that task force. There seemed to be conflict in the cabinet, the result of which was that the Minister of Transport in charge of housing resigned. Apparently this was because of differences that minister had with the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). We now have the present minister in charge of housing.

The Prime Minister indicated there was no crisis in housing, and this precipitated a special debate on housing some two weeks ago. Members of this house have looked at

[Mr. Pepin.]

Bill C-192 and have found that it is merely a housekeeping bill and a capitulation to financial institutions across the country. This resulted in a caucus and a request that the minister bring in amendments to this bill.

Hon. members realize that their efforts in the past were effective in respect of action on the part of the Postmaster General—we did receive amendments to the Post Office Act—and also in respect of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) regarding the Estate Tax bill. Hon. members saw shortcomings so far as Bill C-192 was concerned.

This bill does not have provisions in respect of low income families, a decrease in the price of land or a decrease in interest rates. Hon. members have attempted to persuade the government to seriously consider these three matters.

It is my understanding that the minister has just completed an emergency course in housing and is now ready to go ahead with Bill C-192. I am sure he is anxious to rise in his place and support members of the house and the people of this country by presenting some of the amendments he intends to bring forward in respect of Bill C-192. I am sure he will not repeat that performance we witnessed today in respect of the languages bill. Surely, he will not wait until this bill goes to the committee to rise in his place and tell us his ideas about the shortcomings of the bill and the amendments he proposes. The minister said he would approach this matter with an open mind, and as a result of his past performance I am sure he is anxious to answer these important problems.

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister without Portfolio): Mr. Speaker, first of all I tender my apologies for being late and not hearing the opening of the hon. member's remarks. I got caught in a traffic jam as a result of the construction going on along Wellington street. I hope the hon. member will forgive me. I should like to thank him very much for his kind remarks regarding my new assignment and my involvement in another department for the past ten months—an assignment I very much regret leaving.

The hon. member has used the word "crisis". Under the present circumstances I think this is a word which needs defining. Quite frankly, I prefer to state that in the area of housing this government is very deeply concerned. I hope I can do something to alleviate the situation.

Amendments to the National Housing Act will be brought before the house as soon as