

National Housing Act

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to prolong the debate on this bill or get us involved in procedural wrangles, but I wonder if I may speak to the amendment on a point of order and inform the Chair that at the committee stage this amendment was moved. The chairman of the committee expressed some reservations about it without in any way deciding definitively on the matter, and in fact the amendment was put and voted upon in committee. However, I suggest that you may wish to consider whether the amendment is out of order on the ground that it goes beyond the royal recommendation which reads in part:

... to provide in certain circumstances for loans to non-profit corporations for low rental housing projects of up to one hundred per cent of their lending value and for contributions not exceeding ten per cent of the capital costs of the project to such corporation;

My argument would be, if it appeals to you, that that is the wording of the royal recommendation and that by amending the definition of non-profit organization to include municipally owned corporations, the amendment enlarges the meaning of non-profit organization and changes the circumstances referred to in the recommendation. It is, therefore, a charge on the Crown which is beyond that provided for in the royal recommendation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does anybody else have a contribution to make on the point of order raised by the minister?

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the point of order. Not being either a lawyer or a rules expert I do not have their knowledge, but I will try to speak briefly on a couple of points which seem to me to be at least pertinent. First, there was a favourable ruling on this in the committee. There was actually a vote at that time and the amendment was considered to be in order. That, presumably, is *prima facie* evidence for continuing our discussion today on the acceptability of the amendment.

The rest of the argument that the minister made seems to me to be quite irrelevant. Having made those profound observations, I will sit down.

● (1550)

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, this is a case of trying to offer a contribution without having done any homework on the specific point, because I had no notion that this amendment would be challenged procedurally. I think that the point made by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent), which was confirmed in advance by the minister himself, namely, that this amendment was allowed in committee and voted on, should carry some weight with Your Honour. You are under no obligation to rule the same way as has been ruled by a chairman of a committee, but I am sure Your Honour would agree that if you rule otherwise you would have to have strong reasons for doing so.

It does seem to me, from a quick reading of the Governor General's recommendation, that the provisions set out on page 3 of the bill, in new section 15.1, do not exhaust the terms of that recommendation. I find it difficult to follow the argument of the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Basford) that the proposal contained in this amendment goes beyond the reasonably wide set of terms

[Mr. Broadbent.]

contained in the recommendation. For those reasons, in that the recommendation is very wide, and because the amendment was allowed in committee, I would hope Your Honour would make the same ruling here.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair is inclined to think, upon reading (a) and (b) of 15.1(1) that the proposed addition of (c) regarding a housing corporation, all the shares of which are owned by a municipality, fits within the class or kind that could be defined as a non-profit corporation. We do not want to give too narrow a meaning to the royal recommendation, or the recommendation of the Governor General. I frankly cannot see that the proposed amendment suggested by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby is clearly outside the royal recommendation, and therefore I would rule that the amendment is in order.

Mr. Broadbent: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that very sensible and obviously just ruling.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. No member is allowed to comment on a ruling of the Chair.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I did not know that my remarks were being recorded at that time. When speaking to these amendments on behalf of my party I will be brief. We already have had long and serious discussions on this bill, and a number of the amendments proposed at the report stage were dealt with in committee. However, we want to make brief arguments in support of the amendments, hoping we can get some people to switch their votes and record them in a more sensible way than they did in the past. But we do not intend to drag out the debate.

The purpose of this amendment is to permit CMHC to make loans up to 100 per cent of the lending value of a rental housing project undertaken by a municipal agency. Unamended, the bill would provide 100 per cent loans to charitable non-profit housing operations and co-operative associations, but 95 per cent loans to municipal and provincial housing agencies as well as to private developers of limited dividend projects. If the amendment carries, municipal agencies will at least be in a better situation than private developers constructing limited dividend housing under section 15 of the act, which provides for loans for low rental housing projects.

We think it is desirable to put municipalities in a preferential position in terms of getting funds, when compared with private developers. We think this would be a financial incentive to municipalities that are hard put to raise funds for this kind of extremely important housing development. Therefore, I urge hon. members, regardless of party, to consider the substance of the amendment. It seems to me to fit clearly within the principle of the bill, and adds in a positive way to what I think is the central thrust of the legislation. Aid to municipalities in this respect is needed at this time.

Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview): Mr. Speaker, recently the minister attended tri-level conferences where the federal, provincial and municipal governments tried to determine ways and means of solving some of the national problems, the most important of which is the housing