

Housing

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Blaikie: Would the hon. member permit a question?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Is there unanimous consent for a question?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, my question relates to some of the hon. member's remarks with respect to social housing and the NDP policy with regard to housing. Knowing well the alleged ambitions of the hon. member for the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party in Manitoba, I was wondering if he would be willing to go on record against the social housing policies of the NDP concerning construction of senior citizens' housing right across the province, the construction of social housing in the inner cities—

Mr. Beatty: Is this a speech, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Blaikie: Is he willing to go on record against those policies and thus stay in the intellectual ghetto that the present leader of the Progressive Conservative Party in Manitoba led that party into?

Mr. Kempling: The only intellectual ghetto is in your mind.

Mr. Epp: Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate that the hon. member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie) has been reading newspapers. Obviously that question must have been generated by some electoral fear he has. I want to tell him, Mr. Speaker, my frank personal view is that I would like to see Canadians have the ability to own their own homes. That is my position.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lalonde: Don't give us a sermon, give us an answer.

Mr. Epp: Well, I have heard a lot of sermons and no answers from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde). What I am saying to the hon. member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill is, that is my preference. Obviously there are some Canadians who have not been as fortunate as he or I. Government has a responsibility to those people in terms of social housing, but the goal should be that as many Canadians as possible enjoy home ownership.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Paul E. McRae (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to listen to the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp), but I quite often find myself in substantial disagreement with him, and I would like to take a couple of minutes in that regard.

In the last couple of weeks I have been the victim of some crossfire from the opposite side on interest rates and on the subject we are talking about today. I find it interesting because last week they were demanding that a few of us should vote with their side to bring them back into power so they could reinstitute the regime they brought in a couple of years ago. I

recall that interest rates at that time were nearly as high as they are now, but under our government our interest rates were two or three points above the American rates, and our inflation rate was 9½ per cent when theirs was around 18 per cent. I would wonder what they might be now when our inflation rate is about 9½ per cent, while the American inflation rate is lower. There just did not seem to be any reason at all, the way they were running things, why our interest rates should be above the American rates when their inflation rate was double ours. At that particular point they reappointed Mr. Bouey.

I would now like to deal with a couple of other points the hon. member made. He made the point that property rights did not go into the constitution. He, as well as anyone, knows how that came about; he very ably led the opposition in that debate. But he knows perfectly well that the provinces were very jealous of property rights and basically did not want that right in the Constitution. That came too close to affecting provincial powers. Most of the provincial premiers were of the Tory conviction and said that, so I think we have to accept that as the basic reason.

Mr. Lalonde: So true.

Mr. McRae: One thing I would really like to talk about, and one of the reasons why I helped to vote that government out of power in 1979, is a document known as the Matthews report on housing, produced by a former national president of the Conservative Party of Canada. If you want to find a report which really condemns government supporting people who cannot afford housing, you should look at that report. That report says government should basically get out of it all; do not subsidize co-op housing, profit housing, or any of it. That was a scary document. It would have virtually eliminated CMHC and privatized everything. That, Mr. Speaker, along with PetroCan and interest rates, is one of two or three sound reasons why we decided, along with the NDP, that this government had had its day. The basic institutions around which this country has functioned, certainly since World War II, have been those set up mainly by a series of Liberal governments, including things like CMHC and so on. It is a kind of mixture of private and public institutions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please.

• (2200)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.