

*Government Orders*

That is a good thing because as other members have pointed out, there have been problems in the past as far as the sale of social housing complexes to the private sector, taking those housing units out of assisted housing and depriving Canadians needing housing assistance of those homes and those units of housing.

I suspect this provision is not going to apply retroactively. I am sure the minister would like to comment on that a little later. Also, this provision is only going to be effective for the term of the mortgage financing through CMHC which is generally a 35-year period.

While this clause is going to protect the Government of Canada and the taxpayers of Canada as far as their investment in assisted housing is concerned, it will not apply retroactively as I understand it. It also is only going to apply for new commitments for 35 years from the time of the commitment and will not go beyond that.

It would be nice and helpful if somehow legally we could find a way to allow these kinds of provisions to apply retroactively and also to allow them to continue on in future, bearing in mind the fact that Canadian taxpayers have actually provided for these facilities. That commitment probably will not come to an end after 35 years.

There is one concern I have with respect to the conditions for consent. That relates to whether or not there will be consent given by CMHC and by the government if a project is to be sold with the purpose of using the net receipts to produce more social housing units in the future than there are at present.

One of the possibilities within this whole area of providing assisted housing is with the appreciation of land, with the appreciation of housing, it may very well be possible to sell a particular project and to use the funds to develop new projects and in fact develop more housing units using the same investment made originally. That, I hope, will be taken into account by CMHC and by the government in the days ahead.

As far as social housing generally is concerned, it seems to me that all of us face a major difficulty. That is the cost involved in providing assisted housing down the road. We still have a lot of people to try to look after. It is going to take an awful lot of taxpayers' money if we are going to do it unless we find some new and innovative ways.

I have brought one way to the attention of the minister. I know CMHC is aware of the Delancy Street

concept in San Francisco in the United States. It is a project where the residents build the housing themselves. They finance it through small businesses they are engaged in. Not a dollar or cent of public money is in that project, yet it is one of the projects that is a showcase for the city of San Francisco. Everybody in San Francisco is extremely proud of it and extremely proud of what can be done by individuals using their own initiative.

Again I say to the minister, to CMHC and to the government that this is a model that perhaps will not solve all the housing problems we have down the road, but it is one that certainly has some possibilities to solve a good many of them.

The other aspect of the bill relates to home ownership. Clause 25 and clause 7 relate to the mortgage insurance aspect of CMHC's role and the ability of CMHC to insure mortgages that allow people to buy their own homes.

Clause 25 obviously is a very helpful provision because it means that the total limit on the mortgage insurance fund of CMHC is being increased from \$60 billion to \$100 billion. That means that CMHC is going to have the ability to ensure a greater volume of mortgages, a greater dollar value of mortgages. That means more Canadians will be able to own their own homes.

All of us would agree that is a good thing, whether we are in favour of social housing or assisted housing as everybody in this House is. For those people who can afford to pay for their own homes, then they too need some assistance through the mortgage insurance fund and this is a good thing.

Clause 7 also relates to the mortgage insurance fund. It gives CMHC the power to delegate loan insurance to other governmental bodies or other private sector bodies.

I suppose that begs the question for all of us as to whether this is opening the door toward the privatization of the mortgage insurance fund. Or perhaps under the constitutional discussions it will be the peeling off of the government's commitment and responsibilities to mortgage insurance to provincial governments. I hope that the minister in his remarks during Committee of the Whole proceedings will address that issue as well. There is one thing that is not in this bill that I had hoped would be in it. That is the question of mortgage insurance for something called the reverse mortgage.