

*Adjournment Debate*

no fairness. There is no social justice. The minister would be well advised to go back to square one and start all over again.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

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

HOUSING—GUIDELINES USED BY OFFICIALS CONTACTING HOME OWNERS ON MORTGAGE RENEWALS. (B) ADVICE GIVEN BY OFFICIALS. (C) REQUEST THAT MINISTER MAKE STATEMENT ON MOTIONS

**Mr. Doug Lewis (Simcoe North):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in this adjournment debate to bring to the attention of the House the answers of the minister responsible for housing to the questions which I raised on Tuesday, November 10. At that time I asked the minister responsible for CMHC what guidelines his officials were using when they contacted home owners facing mortgage renewals immediately prior to the budget. The minister responded, to the surprise of everyone in this House, that officials from his office and he personally had responded by telephone in approximately 200 cases. He said that they had been able to obtain deferrals of contracts and contract renewals until after Thursday or Friday of that week. When the minister made that statement he was talking about budget week and budget day.

● (2200)

We submit from this side that the minister had absolutely no business, himself or his officials, telling any Canadian about the details of the budget prior to budget evening. That is the job of the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen), not members of the minister's staff or other ministers. Our party has been very concerned about budget secrecy and preferential treatment.

Today we had an even greater demonstration and cause for concern. We want to know what the minister's office was telling the institutions involved that would persuade them to hold off mortgage renewals until after the budget. Did the minister's office attempt to secure the same deferral for all home owners who had directly or indirectly contacted his office?

My colleague, the hon. member for Peterborough (Mr. Domm), has dramatic proof that the minister was very selective about whom he or the members of his office called. That hon. member brought forward 31 names of individuals who had not been contacted by the minister or his staff, although they had been brought to his attention.

We want to know, and that is why we asked the question and ask it again tonight, what criteria the minister's office was using to determine who should get the deferrals and who should not. Was the minister's office just picking names out of a hat? Where were the guidelines drawn from? The minister replied to one of the supplementary questions with the statement that he unequivocally did not know what was in the budget. That was on Tuesday.

It is interesting to note in retrospect that on Tuesday the minister said he did not know what was in the budget; on Thursday evening we found out what is suggested he was told, yet almost instantly after the budget presentation CMHC presented a detailed document outlining the establishment of a centre dealing with mortgage renewals, complete with long-distance phone lines and a manager. Is not the age of high communications wonderful when a minister of the Crown can establish such procedures within two days? It is inconceivable that a minister could state in this House that he did not know what was in the budget when officials from his office were telling people in Delta, B.C., and Oakville, Ontario, not to renew until after the budget when a whole new departmental structure should appear in an instant.

My question to the minister was prompted by evidence which came to our attention from Delta, B.C., where an individual faced with an increase in mortgage interest from 13.75 per cent to 20.25 per cent was called by an official of the minister's office and told that if the renewal did not have to be signed, he should hold off until Friday, after the budget.

The gentleman I spoke to in Halton, Ontario, was also contacted and told that he should delay renewing his mortgage until after the budget. There will be help in the budget for people like him who are having trouble renewing their mortgages, he was told.

We have information which suggests that, although the minister stated he did not know what was in the budget, employees of Vickers and Benson, the Liberal Party's favourite advertising agency, were certainly well informed. This information will come forward as the week unfolds. The minister stated unequivocally that he instructed his officials specifically to make no reference to the budget and to hold out no promise. We can well understand the minister's embarrassment at the revelation on budget night. The so-called assistance in the budget was a cruel joke. It was certainly nothing that anybody would bother to call anybody about. The minister dashed the hopes of Canadian home owners all across this country.

● (2205)

We are not so concerned about the lack of substance in the budget as we are about the process which was followed. We are concerned about over-all budget secrecy. That is a tradition in Canada. We want to know, Mr. Speaker, how much information was revealed to the minister's officials. What did they do with it and how secret did they keep the information which they obviously had? We saw today the Secretary of State (Mr. Regan) who is in charge of advertising, cut loose and run. We saw the Minister of Finance, who has left the