

Government Orders

With this amendment, Canada Mortgage and Housing would no longer be required to acquire ownership of the relevant property in order to apply its expertise. Over the years, Canada Mortgage and Housing has accumulated extensive, specialized expertise in housing-related property management and development. As I mentioned earlier, we know that many other federal departments and agencies would benefit from it.

The Canada Mortgage Loan Insurance Program is a vital component of facilitating Canadians access to mortgage funds which are needed to acquire decent and affordable housing. We want to continue to provide that kind of assistance in the future. Bill C-82 will therefore increase the existing limit on outstanding loan insurance from the current \$60 billion up to \$100 billion. The new limit of \$100 billion is estimated to be adequate for the next five years.

The bill also contains a number of amendments to consolidate CMHC's borrowing authority. These amendments will give CMHC access to financial markets, modernize its investment authorities and rationalize its income tax status. There will be one central statutory authority for CMHC to borrow to fund its program loans and investments and financial management. This means that the agency will enjoy more flexibility in finding sources of funding and will be able to take advantage of favourable interest rates and conditions.

The income tax exemption for the mortgage insurance fund and the guarantee funds will also be removed. This is intended to have CMHC taxed on the same basis as financial institutions and registered insurance companies. Other amendments are included of a purely administrative or housekeeping nature in order to provide clarification of various provisions.

Briefly, I have presented some of the highlights of this legislation which I hope will be given favourable consideration and provide a clearer understanding of what the government is trying to accomplish with Bill C-82.

I would like to take a moment to speak about the role which Canada Mortgage and Housing has played throughout its history in helping to facilitate proper

housing for Canadians and to respond to various challenges.

In my reading the other day I came across some incidents where a former president was reminiscing about the days when C.D. Howe was responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing. I believe this occurred on April 1, 1946 and he was reminiscing about how Mr. Howe needed to respond to the needs of some 16,000 families of war veterans who needed housing. Shortly after that, there was a further need to respond to conditions implicit in the Korean war, so Defence Construction Limited was created.

Since its inception in 1946, CMHC has carried out under varying circumstances adjustments to conform with the evolving needs of Canadians of many different kinds of housing assistance. This has traditionally involved providing assistance to the most disadvantaged of Canadians and encouraging self-sufficiency in the private housing market to support the financial markets and the housing industry.

The government, as colleagues know, has a number of social housing programs in place to assist those Canadians who cannot obtain affordable, suitable, and adequate shelter in the private market.

The government will continue to do what it can to assist households in need across this country through its programs. It will continue to spend approximately \$2 billion annually and about \$10 billion over the next five years to help meet the housing needs of low-income Canadians.

As colleagues know, at the present time over 650,000 social housing units are being assisted. This will allow CMHC to maintain its obligations to those that it now assists.

One of the most important jobs that Canada Mortgage and Housing does on behalf of the government is to make sure there is mortgage money available for people who want to finance the purchase of a home. Through its mortgage loan insurance program Canada Mortgage and Housing helped over 186,000 households last year to obtain access to home ownership. That is a record for Canada Mortgage and Housing, representing \$13.3 bil-