

ed that Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation officials investigate. They agreed and visited those houses on a day when the temperature was 55 degrees in January.

Why did they select this day? This also took experts from the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation!

I think it abnormal that contractors of this kind are still in business and multiplying their victims, especially under the protection of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

We have in front of us a statement which, I believe, speaks for itself—

The CMHC has already achieved good results. It continues to prepare and revise projects which are still very good but, unfortunately, it allows too many which are not.

All I ask the hon. minister today, all I want to know is this: what can we expect from the department, what can the people who have been cheated expect and are there still honest individuals in the CMHC who can take their responsibilities?

Mr. Speaker, I believe that after so many explanations, illustrations and demonstrations, it can be concluded that things do not always go smoothly in the administration of the corporation. We will merely invite the committee to submit each new provision of the act to an in depth study and to make amendments.

In short, we want the committee to conduct a careful review and to have those responsible for implementation of the act appear before them first of all. Officials appointed by the government and responsible to parliament for implementation of the act should appear before the committee for questioning, as well as the contractors with whom the CMHC has dealt.

It would also be interesting to have some contractors appear who are worse than chameleons, one firm having changed names five times in 15 years. The minister has the right to meet those people.

It would also be advisable to have owners, perhaps represented by their associations, as witnesses before the committee. I feel that such evidence will make it possible to develop a more effective, more humane and more equitable legislation for all Canadians.

• (1250)

[English]

Mr. H. T. Herbert (Vaudreuil): Mr. Speaker, it is with a feeling of real pride that I rise to speak in support of Bill C-133 presently before the House. This bill, taking into account as it does the real sociological implications and requirements of the present time, is doing something which I think has long been necessary in this country, namely, putting emphasis on those objectives which will result in the kind of communities for which I think we are all looking. I challenge any member of the opposition to take issue with the objectives and measures sought to be put into the act. Perhaps I could do no better in opening than refer to the *Montreal Gazette* of today which states that this bill includes measures to assist community planning, to attack land price increases, to give aid to co-operative and non-profit housing groups, to support attempts by low and medium income families to buy their own homes and to promote the restoration and preservation of old residential areas and cities.

Some few weeks ago our minister stated that the challenge before us is to preserve and improve our living spaces in neighbourhoods, villages, towns and our great

National Housing Act

cities in the face of the rapidly accelerating trend to urbanization. If we needed a stimulus in rising to this challenge, we have before us the depressing example of many urban areas of north America and the world that have become virtually uninhabitable because of congestion, pollution and decay, with all of the associated symptoms of crime, disease, poverty and the destruction of the human spirit. At the other end of the population shift, in the rural areas, is the threat of depopulation, abandonment and disappearance of a style of life and a scale of values that is uniquely Canadian. In Canada, we still have time to head off this kind of future by intelligent, rational planning and a concerted national effort involving all of the governments and people in all walks of life.

In attempting to face this challenge, it has been necessary to recognize the problems laid out so adequately by our minister in respect of the physical and social environment in which housing is being constructed. First of all there is the problem of availability, making sure there is enough housing in sufficient variety for the growing population. There is the problem of accessibility, making sure that housing is within the income reach of people who need it. We have the problem of housing quality, making sure that housing is not only sound but that it continually reflects advancement in design and technology.

There is also the problem of planning for the future, mounting research programs to increase our knowledge, re-examining and adapting our institutions and working out new styles of intergovernmental consultation and co-operation in the field of housing and community planning. We also must consider changes in the age structure of the Canadian population which is likely to present a challenge to us, especially in the last few years of the decade. Elderly people are going to represent a substantially greater proportion of the total population, and the demand for senior citizens' housing will be very much greater. Housing for elderly people already receives a significant volume of funds, but the prospect is that within the next few years those funds will have to be multiplied.

I was not born a rich Tory, so possibly I look at housing from a different point of view. I have spent the last 25 years in the construction industry. I can think back to my earlier formative years when I was living in a third storey tenement. We had three rooms to house my mother, my father, my sister and myself. We had to carry water in buckets up three flights of stairs for our normal household needs and we had to carry our dirty water back down. The only convenience was one common to all tenants in the backyard, and that was not a garden.

In those days, the thinking was that we should build huge low-cost housing units in order that we could move all these people and demolish these rat traps—and they were rat traps. When it rained the roof leaked in many places; at night we were always awakened by traps going off that were not filled with just mice, but rats as well. These were the conditions out of which we moved into low-cost housing intended to provide us a different environment.

Mr. Speaker, shall I stop now and continue after lunch?