

We regret that we did not get a copy of the statement until the minister was delivering it in the House. If we had had an opportunity to look at it earlier, my colleague, the hon. member for Northwest Territories (Mr. Firth), would have replied because he has been concerned about this subject matter long before becoming a member of the House. He is concerned, and I am sure others are about the lack of any reference in the minister's statement to involvement of people in both the Yukon and the Northwest Territories in participation in this program. The minister talks about a 75-25 per cent division of capital costs between the federal government and the provinces, but nowhere does he make reference to what is to be done about the territories. I hope this was an oversight on his part, that in the rush to put things on paper it just slipped his mind, that it is not really a slip in policy but that there will be some involvement of a comparable nature respecting native people in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon who far too often are left out of consideration in matters dealt with by this government.

● (1120)

The native people generally have been at the bottom of the economic level for as long as we can remember. They have been the single most disadvantaged group in Canada in educational opportunities, in social development, in rapport with the rest of society, in the degree of recognition extended to them by parliament and the legislatures. While this program is welcome, it is just a slight step in the direction of society paying attention to the single most disadvantaged group we have had in this country over the years and still have.

There are two groups of native people in terms of legal definition, which is unfortunate. First, there are those who are registered as members of a band and classified as such, registered Indians and, second those who fall in the general classification of being Metis or as not having Indian status. In the statement, or that part I have been able to read since it reached us, the minister talks of native people who do not live on reserves. I think this is a sad situation that should not be perpetuated. We should not think in terms of a division between people, of reserve housing and housing which is not on reserves; we should think in a total sense about this matter.

The minister talks in terms of rural areas and I am sure neither the minister nor the native people would want to see a situation where once again native people are singled out as a particular group entitled to a particular quality and type of housing in rural areas where non-native people encounter the same difficulties in respect of sewage facilities, septic tank facilities, water facilities, electrical energy facilities and all those other things. The program should not be promoted as an idea that would be divisive within a community but, rather, all-encompassing.

There were a couple of other failings in the minister's statement which need to be looked at. I refer to interest rates and land assembly costs, the cost of land and the cost of money. These are the two greatest factors in the escalating cost of housing in this nation. If this housing program is going to proceed as envisaged by the minister, and if it turns out later that the people who rent these homes or seek to buy them find that their economic position in life is insufficient for them to be able to pay the interest rates

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or the land costs, then a few years from now they will be in no better relative position than they are now. Unless the problems of interest rates and land costs are tackled, things may come to an end sadder than anticipated by the minister in his glowing statement. Apart from that, this is a welcome move and, I hope, just a commencement.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Caouette (Charlevoix):** Mr. Speaker, I heard with pleasure the statement of the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Basford) this morning because I represent, in fact, an area or a constituency which includes the two areas mentioned in his statement, Indian reserves and rural regions.

The questions which come to my mind and which will have to be brought to the attention of the minister for explanations are, undoubtedly, the provisions concerning loans with regard to the cost of these buildings. I have had the chance to visit personally the reserves in question where homes already supplied with the help of the government were in some way adequate for the needs of the moment. But the same help for Canadians in rural areas is far from satisfactory. I sincerely hope that this new policy will properly allow underprivileged residents of rural areas to gain justice in the field of housing.

On the other hand, the minister stated that special standards for home construction will be formulated. I sincerely hope that the minister will properly revise the standards that were used by the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation these last few years, especially in the Quebec region. According to the standards of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, buildings were found with two inches of ice in wardrobes. Therefore, it is nearly time that these standards be better formulated and especially that Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation inspectors do some positive work.

I hope that the minister will revise not only his policy but also the standards and their enforcement by his department to give justice to the whole population and, especially, as intended in this motion, for people in rural areas.

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[English]

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#### IMMEDIATE APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF INVESTIGATION AND RESEARCH—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION

**Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 43 to seek the consent of the House to move a motion in a case of urgent and pressing necessity. The Combines Investigation Act was designed to protect consumers against the voracious appetite of corporations for profits and to deal with such matters as price fixing, predatory pricing and the like. The urgent situation that has developed is that the potential for protecting the consuming public is being stifled by the government through its refusal to appoint the appropriate officers. Therefore, I move—