

was not around at the time of Confederation. It dealt with the registration of land titles at the time throughout the whole of western Canada, all the land that the new nation of Canada acquired from the Hudson's Bay Company via the Imperial Crown. Since that time, the Province of Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan have all enacted their own land titles legislation.

In January, 1981, Bill C-52 was introduced into the House of Commons. This would have put the situation right. It would have done two things. First, it would have addressed the narrow condominium issue. Second, it would have repealed the Land Titles Act so that the Territories and the Yukon could enact their own land titles legislation, the same as is in place in the provinces. We must remember here that we are talking about the function of registration of land titles and not of the disposition of Crown land, which is done pursuant to the Territorial Lands Act and maybe the Public Lands Grants Act.

• (1610)

At the present time in the Territories, the administration of the Land Titles Act is done by the Territorial Government acting as agent for the federal Government. It would be no great difficulty were it to take over under the terms of its own legislation registration of land titles. The Government of the day never proceeded with that Bill. It was always a low order of priority. This would probably be the preferable way of dealing with the situation rather than by way of the Bill before us. It would address several problems at the same time.

I understand that the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Crombie) intends to reintroduce Bill C-152 or something very similar. For that reason, I understand there is a disposition on the part of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Fretz) and of the House that the subject matter of this Bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development. I would be very pleased if that course of action were followed and if that happened.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise to speak on a Bill which is of utmost importance to the people of the Northwest Territories. In fact, I am heartened to hear that the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Crombie) is intending to move ahead with it. If we were able to get unanimous approval for this Bill in the form of a Private Member's Bill or in the form of government legislation, it seems to me that it would be a great step toward relieving the housing crisis which currently exists in the Northwest Territories.

The Hon. Member who proposed the Bill is certainly very aware of the difficulties currently being faced, particularly in the area of housing, in the Northwest Territories. This particular proposed amendment would allow the construction of condominiums in the Northwest Territories. In a small way it could begin to alleviate the situation which is reaching crisis proportions.

Northwest Territories Condominium Ordinance

We do not intend to supply a number of speakers on the issue because we would like to see it come to a vote in the House this afternoon. If in fact the issue is dealt with and the discussion terminates, it is my understanding of the rules of the House that we would have a vote on the issue. I think it would be roundly supported by most members of my Party and I am sure of the New Democratic Party.

However, I should like to take a moment to outline some of my concerns specifically as they relate to the housing situation in the Northwest Territories. No doubt the Hon. Member is aware of the fact that the housing budget for the Northwest Territories is the largest component of the budget of the Territories. As such, it exceeds the contributions made by most other provinces and parts of Canada with respect to housing budgets. Housing is the number one expenditure of the people of the Northwest Territories. If we look at the amount of money which must be spent to provide affordable housing for people in the Northwest Territories, it is clear that the Government has a very significant role to play in that area. That is why I as the critic for the Liberal Party and members of my Party have very grave concerns about the general direction of this Government which seems to be moving away from government involvement in the housing field.

I refer in a more general way to the decision to cut back 23 per cent on the amount of money which will be made available for home rehabilitation, to cut back on social housing programs and to cut back on the number of units which would have been provided under previous CMHC agreements. The general housing cut-backs indicate the thrust of the Government to get out of the whole area of government involvement in housing, to the point where some concern has been expressed that CMHC is now looking at the possibility of getting out of the whole issue of guaranteeing mortgages in general. If CMHC decided to extract itself from the mortgage lending business and in fact allow it to be done totally by the private sector, areas like the Northwest Territories would be particularly affected in a disastrous way.

I urge the Government to support this initiative which will try to alleviate a very difficult situation. There are as many as eight, ten or twelve family members living in two or three-room houses in the Northwest Territories. It has been recognized by the Government of the Northwest Territories as one of the major social problems it will be attacking in 1985. Also I encourage the Government and its Members to do everything in their power to maintain the social and governmental role for housing which was developed during the last two decades through social housing programs, through co-operative housing programs, through home rehabilitation programs and through other means where the Government decided to play a leadership role. That is particularly crucial in areas such as the Northwest Territories, which are sometimes more subject to the vagaries of the market-place in a much more extreme and severe way than in other more populated areas of the country.

I rise to support vociferously and briefly the Private Member's Bill which the Hon. Member introduced and to encour-