

### *Housing*

than the purchase of a house. Buying a house is buying physical materials. The freedom of trade unions is the climate in which the work is done. I think that housing starts are a priority, but first trade unions must be given back their freedom. As I said, I am amazed that hon. members opposite neglected to mention that fact.

It should be stated clearly over the next few hours, that productivity in the construction industry has declined, that some building trade unions are now under trusteeship, and that someone must be responsible for restoring stability in the building industry. It is not only a question of dollars, as the hon. member for Don Valley would have us believe. Housing starts are not automatic.

Housing starts are not vending machines where one only has to deposit 10 or 15 cents to get a chocolate bar or a cup of coffee. Housing starts occur in the context of a social climate within a society. And it is in such a context that the Minister of State for Urban Affairs met with the mayor of Montreal in March to review one of the most, and possibly the most important program in the urban areas of the country. This program is designed to preserve the present housing stock. It is all very well to start building new houses for families earning \$7,000 to \$8,000 per year. It's utopian to think that all Canadians will one day be able to purchase a house of their own. This is an aim supported by members of the government as well as of the opposition. But it is not the only one: our other aim in the field of housing must be in the social field, namely to preserve existing housing units.

When I stroll in Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal and see all those abandoned houses, I am surprised that it does not create a scandal. It is scandalous to think that all the money invested in infrastructure, sewers, water system, schools and hospitals in those areas are now used at less than 50 or 60 per cent capacity because half the district is progressively being abandoned and houses are empty.

A dynamic policy, Madam Speaker, is a policy aimed primarily at the conservation of the housing stock. And when the mayor of Montreal and the Minister of State for Urban Affairs saw fit to increase to 50 per cent the cost of rehabilitating a housing unit, they had this purpose in mind, the social aspect of the housing policy that must be given priority at this time. When Canadians hesitate to reinvest in the housing industry, we must first protect those who are more subject to market fluctuations, who cannot reinvest, who have dependants live on a fixed income.

● (1520)

Madam Speaker, those are the aspects of the debate I would have expected to be discussed today by members of the opposition. I am not saying that others will not point them out when they take part in the debate later on; on the contrary, I hope they will do so. It is one of the essential factors, as I said a moment ago. But to have the country believe that suddenly 100,000 housing units can be started merely by lowering the interest rate is nothing but eyewash, because at least half the urban lands are already built up, and the concern we must show to preserve the social fabric of these cities is another factor, another objective that we must keep in mind.

[Mr. Joyal.]

I do not believe that generally speaking, Canadians all dream of living in the suburbs. We all know the inconveniences of suburbia as well as its advantages. As a government, we must give the people a choice. We must allow every Canadian to choose adequate housing within his means. That is the true objective. It is not only to have housing starts.

Madam Speaker, in the time remaining before we adjourn, we must raise more questions about those aspects of the operation of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Why, for instance, does the Corporation not have a program to compensate tenants and owners against bankruptcy and shady promoters? Why do we not have an insurance scheme that would force developers, builders, tenants, owners and the government to protect themselves against the bankruptcy of those building swindlers? That is a positive thought, Madam Speaker.

Why for instance should we not review within the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation our warranty procedure, the inquiries made when a developer applies for a loan? Why should we not review those procedures? That is where lies the real failure. It is not by thinking of reducing the interest rate that all of a sudden the building industry will stabilize itself, promoters will become honest and all Canadians will live in single-family suburban homes. We should not centre our attention on that single aspect. I think there are sufficient elements in this debate for our discussion this afternoon to bear fruit.

Madam Speaker, as I said before, I live in and represent a constituency in which 90 per cent of the citizens are tenants and 70 per cent live in houses build 50 or 60 years ago. What can I tell them when I go back there and meet them? "The government has a housing start program to help you buy \$32,000 homes". Madam Speaker, that is not good enough. That is not what they expect of me. What they want me to tell them is that I can prove that there is a form of assistance available to maintain their housing and their urban environment and keep them from deteriorating. That is what they want. They do not want to think that eventually the situation will improve so easily that everybody can move to the suburbs.

When I visit the suburbs of Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver, I do not believe, Madam Speaker, that the aim of a social policy is basically to have everybody live in the suburbs. Opposition members suggested that the minister visit some European cities where new programs may have been implemented. Madam Speaker, one should visit the Paris or London suburbs to realize how little people wish to live in large urban centres where individualism, demythologization and loss of identity are the primary reasons or symptoms of those who move to those suburbs.

If we are to draw positive conclusions from this debate, I think those are the factors we should dwell upon. I do not think the housing situation has reached the point where it is a topic to be raised every second or third month. Instead, I would prefer that opposition members consider all the programs which come under the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs and analyze them. They are not perfect. I for one, Madam Speaker, could criticize at length any of those programs. One only has to look at them, to see how they actually work, and finally make suggestions to the minister. He is always available, always willing to