

Adjournment Debate

studies have demonstrated that basic training for skilled development did not prepare graduates adequately for employment or further education.

Changes in the policy which have been implemented are spread over a three-year period as follows: BTSD must not be given to any one who has not completed the 8th grade; age and total school attendance as eligibility criteria must be tightened up. BTSD must be more occupation oriented and the need for training courses must be emphasized.

Mr. Speaker, I think that this is the direction the government must follow in the future.

[*English*]

HOUSING—REQUEST FOR INTRODUCTION OF PROGRAM WITH REASONABLE INTEREST RATES

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan-Malahat-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, on April 9, in my question to the minister responsible for housing and CMHC I pointed out that 70 per cent of loggers in coastal British Columbia faced lay-offs or short work weeks. There is no doubt that part of the reason for these employment cutbacks was the fact that the industry wanted to soften up union membership for contract talks. As a matter of fact, the contract expired for the IWA on the coast of British Columbia today. It is evident from the militant strike votes that woodworkers have not been intimidated. They intend to get a good contract.

Quite apart from any attempt by the companies to sap militancy, some mills are, indeed, very short of orders, and while the long-term outlook for the forest industry in British Columbia is supposed to be good, there are immediate problems. Some of the methods the companies are using to deal with these problems are not healthy. For example, they are pulping logs that should be sawn into lumber. A recent survey showed that up to 40 per cent and over of logs in a boom that was going to a pulp mill were logs that should have gone to a sawmill. We have evidence of whole logs being exported for process in other countries, or logs that just had a slab taken off. At the same time we are facing an imminent shortage of logs for the future in the industry.

The industry has traditionally depended upon the export market for up to 70 per cent of the production in British Columbia. We simply should not wait for export markets to take up the slack when we have problems in the industry today. We should be developing industry in Canada which can deal with this, and the most basic industry that needs developing here is our housing industry.

● (2225)

Today, because of record interest rates, most Canadians are no longer in a position where they can afford to buy homes. The situation is quite the reverse. Many Canadians who own homes and have been paying on mortgages for a number of years are now losing their homes when they have to renegotiate their mortgages at these killing interest rates. It is a chilling statistic that 11 per cent of the Canadian people are

now forced to pay more than 50 per cent of their incomes for housing. And our housing stock, especially for low-income people, is dangerously low. People are being forced to move into accommodation which ten years ago we would have considered to be very clearly inadequate.

We can look at the example of our failure with regard to Indian housing. While the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has announced that it has made money available, it just recently sent out a directive to Indian bands which requires that the bands give guarantees that any houses which are started must be completed. However, there is no labour component program which has been instituted by this government, and the funding which is provided for these houses is clearly inadequate. Yet no money is being released until the bands can give some kind of guarantee that the housing starts will be completed. The government is pushing on to the Indian bands the problems it has allowed to accumulate over many years. Obviously something is terribly wrong.

It should be plain even to the Liberal cabinet that there is a connection between lay-offs in our forest industry, the lack of decent housing and the ridiculously high interest rates this government has imposed upon the people of Canada. There is a need for an imaginative program, and there could be an imaginative program. In co-operation with the provinces and with municipalities the federal government could use some of its resources for land assembly projects. This would cut out some of the massive profits being made by real estate companies. Low interest mortgages could be provided so that people could buy homes without committing themselves to long terms of poverty and uncertainty. The public and co-op housing sectors could be developed.

The minister pointed to the failure of the British Columbia government to take initiatives in its budget to help the housing sector, and for once I agree with the minister. Along with other British Columbians, I work for the day when that government will be replaced by one which does care about housing and which will act to meet the housing needs of its people.

However, the federal government cannot hide behind the failure of provincial governments. The federal government has a responsibility for interest rates. It has the power to take the initiative to develop a rational land program and a rational housing policy. This would not solve all the problems of our lumber industry, but it would go a long way toward taking the slack out of the present situation, and I urge the government to develop a program which would begin to meet these needs.

● (2230)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Dennis Dawson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I would like to give a more detailed answer to the question asked on April 9 by the hon. member. The high interest rates on mortgages have no doubt made it more difficult for people to own their homes and they have had a negative impact on the