

this may be administratively difficult, but governments have been known to solve administrative problems. Why should we not allow a person to deduct from income part, at least, of the money paid for mortgage interest, or part of the money paid as municipal taxes? We could grant that type of relief to those who rent. We do not need demonstration projects.

Before the last federal election the government announced a \$100 million demonstration program. You know, the housing industry of Canada, associations of home owners, tenants—associations of all kinds, all groups in this country—will tell you that we need housing in this country. We do not need \$100 million demonstration programs.

I wondered about the sincerity of the government when it announced the \$100 million demonstration program, the high point of which was to be the development of a second Habitat in the riding of the then minister responsible for urban affairs. I wondered about the good faith of the government; more than that, I wondered about its good sense. That \$100 million—and the hon. member for Comox-Alberni mentioned some interesting programs—could be the foundation to the sorts of programs this minister is trying to establish.

Let me touch on something touched on by the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Darling). He spoke about the majority of people in Canada living in urban centres, of more and more people being packed into smaller and smaller areas of land. I know big cities are important, but people living in them are encountering increasing difficulties. I wish the government would take a hard and constructive look at programs of decentralization and diversification so that people could be induced to live in small communities surrounding our larger cities. In this way they might enjoy a better life style than is possible in congested cities.

Wishing for this to happen will not make it happen. You cannot wish for congested urban areas to stop growing, because growth in this country will not stop. It must take place somewhere. We must, somehow, rationalize urban growth. Growth must be balanced against the necessity for preserving agricultural land. We should look beyond congested cities and consider establishing small communities surrounding our cities. If such a scheme is to work, and the minister talked about this earlier, it is necessary to do more than assemble serviced land, more than develop sewage and water systems. If this scheme is to work we must make sure that people who live in such communities can get to and from their places of work easily.

● (2150)

Over the long term, this is going to mean a very strong commitment to inter-urban transit in this country. It seems an incongruous thing that at a time when we are trying to conserve fuel and the government is planning on bringing forward a conservation policy with respect of fuel, the railroads are raising their fares. This will discourage traffic on those railroads. If traffic were diverted to the railroads it would save fossil fuels in this country.

It is in those areas that this minister must direct his energy and the policies of the government should be directed. Rather than simply writing statutes, promulgat-

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ing regulations, and issuing press releases and lovely orange and white coloured documents, the government should be starting on a concerted program.

There is a great difference between the statement of what the policy is in the drafting of a bill and the putting of that bill into action. There are many questions we are going to have to answer over the next few years. The measure of our answers to those questions will be the measure of what our society will be.

I want to return to what I said at the beginning. Nothing can be done in terms of the great problems that face us, whether provincially, municipally or federally, unless there is a commitment by this government, provincial governments and municipal governments to examine every program to see whether it is necessary today or whether it can be delayed for one, five or ten years without hurting the social fabric of the country. This may well involve a tremendous amount of planning. We must determine whether each of these programs is necessary. Out of this searching review of all government programs we must establish a set of priorities. If the development of housing is one of those, then some other programs will have to follow behind.

The government was given a mandate on July 8, 1974. I wish it had been otherwise, but I do not begrudge it a mandate. However, I ask it to use the mandate to look at all its programs and encourage other governments to look at theirs. I ask it to use its mandate to establish priorities in this country so that the questions of food and housing, the basic questions of this nation, can be faced in a way whereby the people of this country can have confidence that something will be done. They must have confidence that if money is put into those programs, something will be done. One of the most important programs must be housing and the development of serviced land. That is the challenge of this minister and this government. It is a challenge which, I am sorry to say, this legislation does not meet.

Mr. Cecil Smith (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise to speak on Bill C-46 because in the area I represent many jobs are unfilled due to the lack of housing. This condition has prevailed for some time.

If the government is really concerned about doing something with regard to the rate of unemployment in Canada, it will give areas of poor housing some consideration. There is potential employment. It should promote housing projects in the northern part of Canada.

Houses are being built on many Indian reserves in Canada, as well as in many small remote communities. However, in my opinion they are not being built to the standard for which they are being used. The houses now being built are designed for forced air and indoor plumbing systems. The people in these homes find that, after heating their wash water and other water used in the everyday keeping of a home, condensation builds up on the inside of the houses. It is much colder in northern Canada than in this part of the country. When these houses have a large build-up of condensation, there is rotting around the floor joists. It is necessary to carry out extensive repairs within five years of the completion of the house.