

Government Orders

I know my colleague, the former minister, is shaking his head because now he agrees. He sees the folly of his previous ways. I think he has had a change in attitude and a change in approach. It is never too late. It is never too late to change. Our only hope is that he will put additional pressure and give support to the minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing so that when he goes before the cabinet committee on economic development he will be able to see that moneys under RRAP not only provide needed assistance to senior citizens and other Canadians in terms of renovations to their homes but add immensely to increasing the employment base in Canada.

There are some who would argue that it adds to the employment base in Canada but not appreciably. I disagree. For communities in Nova Scotia such as the one the minister responsible for housing comes from or ones in Pictou county, Annapolis Valley, Cape Breton county, Halifax county and other parts in Atlantic Canada, that kind of economic spin-off would create meaningful jobs. It would utilize carpenters who are so massively unemployed across this country. It would add immensely to the construction industry. In many parts of this country unemployment is in excess of 70 per cent to 75 per cent in the various trades, whether they be plumbers or electricians. These are the kinds of individuals whom we represent in the Parliament of Canada.

• (2100)

That kind of money is better spent on the housing industry, as I know my colleague from London East would agree, than the \$21 million being spent on a propaganda war for the minister of industry, trade and commerce. It is absolutely asinine to be buying photographs, newspaper advertisements and television advertisements when we could be providing much needed assistance to the housing industry, consequently making an appreciable difference in the employment rate.

I have disagreed with the present minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing on a number of issues, but I hope that the minister opposite shares my objectives. I am confident that the minister opposite

would want to have additional resources to answer those kinds of needs.

However, I am not certain that he has the support of his colleagues. I do not know if that minister, the phantom minister as I refer to him, the Minister of State for Small Businesses, has any understanding whatsoever of the housing needs in this country. I think that minister is more interested in having nice coloured photographs—

Some hon. members: Booklets.

Mr. Dingwall: —and booklets printed in the United States to promote some of the programs in his own department. The money that is spent on that kind of a brochure, a glossy, multicoloured brochure, could be better spent on the housing needs of ordinary Canadians.

I do not know where the Minister of Communications is when it comes to the housing needs of Canadians. We have not seen any demonstrable signs from that minister to support the diligent efforts of the minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing. We think this minister is the Lone Ranger. He is the only one concerned with the housing needs of Canadians.

We do not know if the Minister of Employment and Immigration understands the importance of housing or the housing needs in this country. We think this minister has all of his priorities wrong in terms of trying to develop jobs in this particular country.

I am somewhat saddened to say that the Minister of State for Small Businesses has been a complete and utter failure, and I say that with sincerity. He has been an utter failure in supporting real economic developments in this country. He is only exceeded in that capacity by the Minister of Communications. I do not know if that minister would understand the difference between an outhouse and a four-bedroom home in downtown Toronto.

I would hope that those members opposite would give serious consideration to supporting the minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing in providing the necessary dollars so desperately needed in this country for housing, as alluded to by my colleague from London