

Housing

less stress upon the people who live there. Also, this would help the taxpayer in the smaller communities.

It is obvious to me that there must be some rationalization in cities such as Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto. I say that with all due deference to the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Whiteway). I did not realize that he was so knowledgeable about urban transportation, coming as he does from a largely rural area. I think that governments would serve the public better if, instead of starting massive projects in Toronto and Vancouver, they would seriously consider whether that is in the best interest of those areas, or whether it would not be in the interest of the provinces to build better homes in the more isolated areas so that people would stay there instead of converging on the large centres.

Let me give you an example on Vancouver Island. We do not yet have a highway connecting communities such as Port Hardy with the rest of the island, and in most cases people do not have television either, yet we have the largest copper mine in British Columbia. We also have several large pulp mills. We are trying to keep people there but we are not providing them with transportation or communication. Then we say that we should be spending many more millions of dollars in the larger areas. I submit to you that one of the answers may be to improve some of the rural areas. If we spent more money on transportation and communications in the more remote areas, perhaps we would not have such a problem in the larger cities and the core areas.

I would like to make a few remarks now regarding energy conservation, but first let me give you as an example the case of my daughter who was married a few years ago at the age of 23, and she and her husband purchased a home. When I was 32 or 33 I thought myself fortunate to be able to purchase a house. The young age at which my daughter could purchase a house made very apparent to me how fortunate we are in Canada. Obviously you want to have a house when you are raising a family—you do not need a house when you are 40, 50 or 60 years old. AHOP has done a great deal for Canadians.

I recall the time when I went to Europe for the first time in 1974 to attend the Law of the Sea Conference which was held in Geneva. I was surprised to find that in Geneva banks do not lend money for mortgages. If you wish to purchase a home, you must pay for it in cash. I asked about the price of houses and was surprised to learn that a house which would normally cost \$30,000 or \$40,000 in my area, in Switzerland costs approximately \$160,000 in Swiss francs. A person buying a house in Switzerland is supposed to pay for it in cash because Swiss banks do not make loans on mortgages. People in Switzerland, as well as in Germany and many other European countries, do not approach home ownership the way we do. They do not expect to own a house. It is only in exceptional cases that people own a house. We in Canada consider it our right.

With AHOP and the government's policy to construct a million new homes over a five year period we have taken a step in the right direction to assist younger people especially to purchase housing they can afford. If they require assistance,

[Mr. Anderson.]

we provide it in the form of a subsidy. This has also been true with regard to single parents. Before AHOP there was no chance for a single parent to purchase a single family dwelling. Now they can do it under AHOP. I am not taking credit for it. I think that the ministers, the government and the various people who have worked on this program for many years deserve the credit. This is progress. If you had listened today to some of the comments you might have believed most Canadians were living in caves, rubbing stones together to make fire. I assure you this is far from the case.

Regarding energy conservation which is mentioned in this motion, I think that over a period of years Canadians have been used to an abundance of cheap energy which has allowed all of us the luxury of wasteful ways. I believe sincerely that it will be a wrenching experience for most Canadians to adopt less wasteful ways because of the disruption and confusion that the increased cost of gasoline for their cars and fuel oil for their furnaces will cause. I believe also that as a result, government, industry and various institutions in our country will be severely criticized because people have to pay a very high price for a commodity which previously was cheap. We have been very wasteful.

● (1602)

May I quote an article which is apropos, and although it applies to the United States I think in many ways it can also be put in context in Canada. This is from the *New York Times* and the quotation is from an editorial:

Our political leaders have the formidable, almost impossible task of convincing over 200 million Americans, living in the midst of an apparent abundance of energy, that the catastrophes of energy exhaustion are lurking just around the corner . . . In a democracy, the government cannot dictate energy policies. The American electorate has the ultimate power to choose either to accept on faith that the energy crisis is real (if it does not want to verify personally the technical details on which the predictions are based) or to ignore the warnings, thereby hastening the exhaustion of energy resources and its inevitable catastrophic consequences. If the public cannot be convinced of the seriousness of the energy crisis, the necessary actions (energy conservation and development of new energy sources) cannot be taken. If we wait for the tangible evidence of energy crisis, it will be too late.

Indeed, perhaps future historians will point to the failure of our nation to respond to the warnings of an energy crisis as an example of the obsolescence of the democratic form of government in a modern world with limited resources.

In my opinion that summarizes what we as Canadians are facing. It is important to treat this as seriously as possible and to convince, not only members from this House because I believe most members of this House are aware of the crisis we are facing, but to get this message across to the people of Canada. And also to get the message across that it is not necessarily a question of good guys and bad guys that have caused this situation, but perhaps the depletion of a renewable resource and our cartel which has quadrupled the price of world oil over the last three or four years. Maybe it is a good thing that a cartel of this sort did come in, because it has made us realize that we cannot continue the wasteful practices which in the past we have been justly accused of practising. I do not think we should be proud of the fact that if we wanted to go to the store for a package of cigarettes, there was no thought—