

George-Peace River (Mr. Oberle) the opportunity to expand on a very dreadful situation.

As has already been said by the hon. member for Lambton-Kent (Mr. Holmes), the problems and complexities in dealing with native peoples have for many years confronted Canadians, the House of Commons and, more particularly, those hon. members serving on the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development. With regard to native housing, I am particularly concerned that this very government introduced, under the auspices of the former minister of Indian affairs and northern development, an artificial division between the metis, non-status Indians and status Indians. The actions of the former minister created a division which I think was purposely planned and orchestrated by the government. What would serve this government better than to have a division and to take the heat off itself for its failure to develop policies for native peoples, particularly in the area of housing?

How many times over the years have hon. members of this House and thousands of Canadians like us driven on the highways and back roads of the Fraser River country of British Columbia, the west coast of that province, Vancouver Island, the Yukon and the Territories, Whitehorse and Yellowknife and the prairies and maritime regions and seen unpainted hovels and shacks which are described as Indian homes? How many have been offended by the sight of them, and how many have scarcely noticed them as they passed by?

For many years that has been the public's perception of native housing. The public has seen unpainted shacks, cluttered yards, hand-me-down clothes, unwashed and unkempt appearances. With dirt floors and leaking roofs, what can we expect? The conditions our native people live in have vastly improved, but when it has improved from zero, a great deal of improvement is still needed. While that improvement is perceptible to Canadian people, we still see tacky-boxes lacking in concept, imagination and design, houses which are inadequately heated, inadequately insulated, improperly constructed, in many instances very poorly wired, and totally lacking in any concept of being perhaps a little different from neighbouring native homes. I wonder what Canadians think about the approach of this government to native housing problems, whether they be in rural areas or in urban areas.

I spoke to someone in my riding who is with CMHC and asked him about rural and native housing. He corrected me and said that it is not rural and native housing, but rural and remote housing. Why has it been changed? Is that a change in policy? Do members of the government find that the people who live in rural areas are offended by the fact that their program is lumped in with the program for native people? What was the reason for the change? Does it sound better, or is it simply a change in the direction of the government?

It is not uncommon for the legislators of this nation to be met by criticism from the public about the money which is being spent on our native peoples. I had the opportunity to be in Regina last week, and one of the concerns expressed to me by some of the people there was about the amount of money being spent on native peoples. They felt it was disgraceful and

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wasteful. Unfortunately, this perception of waste and of useless spending is generated by the problems which have been created in that community as a result of the influx of native people into it. This government has never demonstrated any concern or developed a policy to cope with that problem. If anyone has helped our native peoples in urban centres, it has been the native peoples themselves—and thank God they were able to do so.

I am sure the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) is well aware of this very pressing problem in his own province. I would not be surprised to hear that delegations of people from Regina have visited him and told him they are concerned and upset about the influx of native peoples into Regina. Those same concerns are expressed in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and every major city across Canada. Why be ashamed of these problems? Why not address ourselves to their solution? Or are we going to ignore them and hope they will go away? Are we going to continue to spend money when these problems should be solved in a different way? They are problems of social need, they are just as acute as the housing problem, and they are directly linked with the housing needs of our native peoples. Or are we to encourage them, as the hon. member for Northwest Territories (Mr. Firth) said, to spend those few dollars in the beer parlour so that they will end up on skid row, used and abused, or go into the area of prostitution or any other area of crime that will generate a few dollars? This is a shocking commentary on the way in which we have approached, and have attempted to resolve, a very serious problem.

● (1650)

I have had the opportunity to travel in the maritimes and the northern part of British Columbia. I have spoken to the native people. Indeed, last summer I had the opportunity to go on a tour of the maritimes with the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. One of the principal concerns of these people is that the government has scarcely raised the subsidy for native housing. How many times, I ask the members of this House, have you seen in the corridors of the House of Commons, in the west block or in the Confederation Building groups of native people who appear here as delegations? I wonder if members have ever thought about this and wondered what they were doing here.

I suggest that scarcely a week goes by when these people are not here. One of their principal concerns time and time again, whether they are here as delegations to see private members or as a committee to appear before the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development, is that of native housing and the fact that the cost of such housing today is twice what it was five years ago. But will this government produce extra dollars or generate an increase in the subsidy? No. This government still expects the native people to build the same houses now that they could build five years ago for the same number of dollars. What do they end up with? A shack. This same government put \$5 million into a native program on Vancouver Island for a logging industry for the native people, and then backed out of the program in less than