

*Housing Accommodation for Members*

surprised at this new idea advanced by the hon. member for Calgary West (Mr. Smith).

Mr. SINCLAIR: They do it in Washington.

Mr. FOURNIER (Hull): They may. There is something in what the hon. gentleman says about the government providing housing for members of parliament. The hon. gentleman says that when he comes from afar to Ottawa he has trouble in finding a flat or an apartment or a house. That condition exists all over the country, not only for members of parliament. There are a lot of other people who complain, and perhaps with reason.

Why the hon. member undertook to ask me to put up houses for members of parliament I do not know. We have never had any such problem to handle in my department. Perhaps it is a question that could be studied by the architects in the department, and then perhaps we could get a consensus of the members of the House of Commons to see how many would agree to that suggestion. I do not know whether a majority would want to be directed to lodgings when they come to Ottawa. They would hardly have a choice if it was to be a compulsory system. If it is to be on a voluntary basis, then we would want to know whether we could rent these houses to other people or whether the members of parliament would be segregated. We would have to make quite a study of this new idea.

Mr. SMITH (Calgary West): I was referring to flats, not houses.

Mr. FOURNIER (Hull): Apartments or flats. However I was drawn into the discussion and I shall consider it. The hon. member has directed his suggestion to the Minister of Public Works and has said that if it is not considered seriously my estimates will get a ride. I am always ready to be ridden, if that is what he means.

I do not know whether he has addressed his remarks to the right minister. There has been a lot of housing under government control since the war and I have not touched any of it. Perhaps the suggestion should have been addressed to another minister, but it may be that the hon. member has made so many suggestions to that minister that he feels it is time for a change. However I am going to consider his suggestion, and anything he wishes to ask me when my estimates are up I shall do my best to answer.

Mr. ROWE: He thinks you may be able to build better houses than the other minister.

[Mr. Fournier (Hull).]

Mr. FOURNIER (Hull): He has been building some pretty good houses.

Mr. SMITH (Calgary West): You are acquainted with him and I hope you will let him know about what you and I have said.

Mr. FOURNIER (Hull): I never thought the hon. member was so bashful.

Mr. H. W. HERRIDGE (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I wish briefly to express my support of the remarks of the hon. member for Vancouver North (Mr. Sinclair) in connection with the flood disasters in certain parts of British Columbia. I agree with his suggestion in respect to the necessity for immediate relief and also for long-range planning to remedy this situation in the future. The hon. member described most accurately the causes of this flooding in British Columbia. The same causes have produced previous floods on the Columbia river. In 1894 we had a flood identical with the one this year and from the same causes. In that year there existed at the headwaters of the Fraser and Columbia the same causes as exist today, heavy snowfalls and sudden hot weather.

We have been more fortunate in my constituency up to date than they have in the Fraser valley, but considerable damage has been done with farm lands and industrial sites flooded. The main point of danger has been the lower portion of the city of Trail and East Trail, where several blocks in the business area have been flooded and where a number of houses in the area along the riverbank have been flooded. Through the excellent co-operation between the city of Trail, the reserve army and other organizations in the community, along with that of all the people, young, middle-aged and old, they have been successful in building sandbag dikes to hold the river back and prevent a major catastrophe.

In this connection the people of my constituency, particularly the people of Trail, wish me to express their appreciation of the assistance that has been given to date by various federal agencies, other communities and particularly the Royal Canadian Air Force which flew in urgently needed sand bags. I rise at this time to make two points. I agree with the necessity for immediate federal and provincial assistance to those who have suffered in the Fraser river area.

The point I wish to make is this. As a result of the announced policy of the government to consider the Fraser valley disaster a national disaster, there may be a tendency in some quarters to run to the federal government to ask for assistance for every small unfortunate happening throughout Canada. We should try to keep our perspective. We should formu-