

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

lucky and has enough influence, to find a home of any size or dimension.

Dr. Deutsch set a target of 170,000 starts in this year. I am sure that the latest statistics which I have been able to procure from Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation will be of encouragement to the hon. member, who is so objective. As I have only three minutes I will simply point out that the number of starts will reach 170,000 by the third quarter of this year, and there is a very good indication that this rate will continue to rise. In other words, by the third quarter of this year the housing starts in Canada will have reached the target set out by Dr. Deutsch and recommended by the Economic Council of Canada.

The question of low rental housing, as is known to the hon. member, who belongs to a party which respects the constitution of this country, comes under provincial jurisdiction. The housing act puts housing at the disposal of the municipalities and housing corporations of the different provinces, and it is up to the provinces to show a little more initiative and to take advantage of the very enlightened legislation which is available, and the huge sums of money which go untapped and unused year in and year out because of the lack of initiative on the part of the provincial authorities.

In so far as the interest rates are concerned, I think again the hon. member will be pleased to know that it has been reduced from 7.25 to 7 per cent.

In conclusion I wish to say that I am very proud of the fact that because of a series of circumstances, the initiative of the minister in generating spring starts by providing 20,000 loans, the reduction in the interest rate from 7.25 to 7 per cent, and the initiative of the government in permitting the banks to re-enter the mortgage field, we will meet this year—not at the end of the year but at the beginning of the third quarter—the target which, as stated by Dr. Deutsch, is in Canada's best interests.

● (10:20 p.m.)

[Translation]

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS—QUEBEC—
PROTEST RESPECTING PROPOSED
REDUCTION OF SERVICE

Hon. Martial Asselin (Charlevoix): Mr. Speaker, the question I raised today is not new, as I dealt with it when the minister introduced in the house the new bill concerning the transport commission.

[Mr. Mackasey.]

If I am renewing my attempt today, it is because since this new bill was passed by the house, immediately afterwards—and I could say even before it was passed—the Canadian National Railways applied to the Canadian Transport Commission for permission to discontinue its passenger service between Quebec and La Malbaie. This service has existed, as the minister knows, for about 50 years. It began during difficult times in order to meet the economic needs of our area. Now, the Canadian National Railways are applying to the Canadian Transport Commission for its discontinuance.

Obviously the minister is not at fault but since he assumed his office, my area suffered from certain decisions of the Department of Transport.

Hon. members will recall that last year, I also raised a question concerning the discontinuance of cruises by Canada Steamship Lines between Montreal, La Malbaie and the Saguenay. I had asked the then minister to intervene, to bring pressure to bear on that company in order that that service be continued. The minister may have made representations, but the company nevertheless discontinued its service between Montreal, the north shore and also Pointe au Pic in my riding, and that brought about a loss of employment for 200 persons and caused significant losses to the tourist industry.

This year there is another problem: the C.N.R. has decided to discontinue its passenger service between Quebec city and La Malbaie.

I must tell the minister that his decision raised a wave of opposition and protests from businessmen, boards of trade, intermediate organizations and pressure groups; immediately, the county councils met with all mayors sitting on the county councils to hire economists to study the situation. Municipalities of eastern Quebec were also called upon. The minister should know that Quebec city passed a resolution calling on the Department of Transport to exert pressure upon the Canadian National Railways so that a decision may not be rendered by the Board of Transport Commissioners. The authorities of the cities of Villeneuve and Charlesbourg, near Quebec, have done the same.

Recently, and this was the subject matter of the question I put this afternoon, the Quebec legislature passed a resolution asking the C.N.R. to abandon the proposed elimination of the passenger service between La Malbaie and Quebec.