

Supply

—at least to provide free rail transportation to Sept-Îles for employees and their belongings, including mobile homes.

I understand that the provincial Government of Newfoundland has since that date provided mobility grants in the amount of \$3,000 to help workers move out of that disaster area. It is very interesting that the man who has undertaken to lead this country and look after the interests of all parts of the country, including Newfoundland, the Prime Minister, treated Labrador City so very differently from the way he treated Schefferville. Of course, he has not told us the reason, but we can guess the reason by looking at the electoral boundaries. He treated people in Schefferville very well because they were his voters. He and his company did nothing for those in Labrador City. Of course, they were not obliged to do anything because they were not the voters of the Prime Minister. They had no opportunity to vote against him individually.

It goes beyond that. Newfoundland has had a modest co-operative housing program which has grown in the last few years. Recently there were at least three co-operatives which were encouraged by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to expect that they would be getting co-op allocations. The Kilbride, Heritage and Confederation Co-operatives are all in St. John's. These co-ops are not a big deal by CMHC standards, only 51 units all together, but they matter a lot to the people who put their volunteer time into those programs. Not only the Prime Minister and not only the Hon. Member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor)—who made a fulsome speech in Toronto last spring on behalf of his Party lauding the co-op program—but everybody, except for the private building industry, has recognized the value of co-operative enterprise. It is a small part of the economy and a small part of the housing sector. However, it does enlist volunteer energies in producing the best sort of housing available within the cost allowed by CMHC. That has the effect not only of welding people together in the creation of a co-op, but also of ensuring the durability in the quality of the building.

● (1630)

The people who are involved in co-ops do not want jerry-built buildings, because they are going to live in them and maintain them. It has been shown that co-op homes are generally of better quality and better maintained than rental housing for the same price. Of course, people who can afford private homes are in a different class in every sense, but here we are speaking of people who cannot buy their own homes and for whom home ownership is most easily available through the shared ownership of co-op housing.

For a dozen years, co-op housing has been growing in every province of Canada. It has been found beneficial by everyone except the private builders and those politicians who see their interests as being in association with those of private builders. There has recently been a sharp downturn in the co-op housing program. The social housing program from which 2,500 units were cut last year by the Liberal Minister has had another 2,500 units cut this year. Most of those cuts appear to be cuts in the co-op program.

In Halifax, there were two co-op projects that had been told they had priority. They had been reviewed, their performance was good and their plans were good. Seaview Housing Co-op, which was formerly known as Basinview, and Flip-Flop Housing Co-op had been told that they had priority. A couple of days ago, these projects were cancelled. The Crossroads Co-op project was also cancelled. In fact, there are no co-op units allocated for Newfoundland any longer.

I have not been able to find out about the complete co-op situation in Halifax and Nova Scotia because the present Minister of Labour (Mr. McKnight) who is responsible for housing, although his Department pumps out a great deal of paper, pumps out almost no information about what he is doing. Members of his staff are experts at not answering questions on the telephone. We have to pick this information up piece by piece from different parts of the country.

There are hundreds of other co-op projects across the country that have also been cut in the same unjustifiable way under the present Minister. I will not go into those today because the other examples of this did not occur in the Atlantic provinces.

The policy of the Government toward housing in the Atlantic provinces cannot be justified. It cannot be defended on the grounds that it inherited the problem from its predecessor. We are talking about cuts made to a proven, useful program by a Government which, in its election campaign, promised not to make those cuts. Even this fall, the present Minister of Labour who is responsible for housing said that he did not intend to cut back the allocations for public housing. A cut of \$9 billion was made in his budget, but he said that that would not be reflected in the allocations to housing but would somehow be made by shaving production costs. That particular bit of fantasy has now been blown away by the Minister's actual decision to cut the allocations.

I would like to comment on the human problems caused by these few examples to which I have referred. I have here a letter from Ron Cromwell, a Halifax alderman, addressed to the Minister of Labour who is responsible for housing. He writes:

I am writing to ask that if at all possible, you will do everything in your power to assist the Seaview Housing Co-op in their request for funding. This Co-op has been doing a great job and are ready to bring more affordable housing to our area, to help counter the already low vacancy rate that already exists.

I have a clipping from the Halifax newspaper referring to the extremely low vacancy rate in Halifax of 0.5 per cent. An article in *The Daily News* of Wednesday, May 1, reads as follows:

The number of publicly funded co-operative housing units to be built in the Halifax metro area has been slashed by 70 per cent for 1985.

As well, a new practice that has been introduced by the Government is that when programs are cut, as little notice as possible is given. The article continues:

The huge cuts—which went unannounced for the first time—by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, comes in the midst of a desperate need for more housing.

The article goes on to refer to provincial housing Minister Mike Laffin who, I presume, is of the same political persua-