

The Address—Mr. Fleming

I point out that there is no system of priorities set up for materials for these plans, and in the second place the program of this government in defence production has been so slow in getting started that there is no hope of immediate benefit for defence workers. And look at the condition attaching to it. A house for a defence worker, to qualify under this provision, must be located within fifteen minutes transportation from the defence plant. In our larger urban centres how many houses can be built within fifteen minutes transportation of defence plants? Why, in the city of Toronto these houses have to be built outside the city limits, while the defence industries are within the city, far more than fifteen minutes transportation away. So a provision of that kind has tied defence workers to an impossible condition.

I say further, as Mr. Churchill in England has said, that "house building should have priority second only to national defence" itself. And Mr. Frost said the same thing in Ontario, that we should regard housing as a necessary and integral part of our defence program—a necessary and integral part. That is the policy the Minister of National Health and Welfare now attempts to deride.

Mr. Martin: You have not answered the question yet.

Mr. Fleming: Housing is a matter of federal responsibility. Now we find the Minister of Resources and Development (Mr. Winters) and the hon. member for Spadina (Mr. Croll) saying on public platforms that housing is a provincial responsibility. We always find that when things are going well in any field this government claims that the credit is all federal, and the subject clearly lies within the federal field. But the minute they realize what a botch they have made of it, and that they are faced with an impossible situation, they say that it is not a subject of federal responsibility but a matter for the provinces. It is the same old story. Every time there is a problem confronting them they say, "This is not our responsibility; it is that of the provinces."

I say here tonight to hon. members opposite that housing is a federal responsibility. It is a federal responsibility, first, because the problem is national in its scope. It is federal because in the second place only the federal government has financial control and in the third place because it has control of materials. Do not forget that. Then in the fourth place it is a federal responsibility because in 1949 the federal government promised to meet this problem and to beat

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it. Fifth, it is a federal responsibility because federal policies have created it. Defence policies have created this concentration of defence workers in cities. Immigration policies are bringing more people to Canada. I am not quarrelling with that, but those newcomers to this country are going into the larger industrial areas. They are going into Ontario, because they like to come to a province which offers such attractive possibilities.

Some hon. Members: Time.

Mr. Fleming: I can finish in a minute.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): Mr. Speaker, while I admire the hon. member very much I am not surprised that he would object to curtailing speeches in the House of Commons, particularly when he has been speaking for over an hour.

Mr. Fleming: That is not true.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): We did not object, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Fleming: I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): The hon. member will not observe the rules of the house.

Mr. Fleming: I rise on a question of privilege.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): The hon. member has had sixty minutes of privilege.

Mr. Fleming: That statement is utterly untrue. It is now 8.41 p.m. The minister knows that I started speaking at 8.04½, and before the dinner adjournment I had two minutes exactly. I have not had more than forty minutes, notwithstanding the untrue statement—

Mr. Fournier (Hull): The hon. member has raised his question of privilege, and I should have the privilege of saying a few words.

Mr. Green: Is this on the point of order or is it a speech?

Mr. Fournier (Hull): It is going to be a very short speech with no abuse.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order, all I will say is that the time of the hon. member for Eglinton has expired.

An hon. Member: And how!

Mr. Fournier (Hull): I agree with you, Mr. Speaker, that his time expired a long time ago.

Mr. Fleming: That is untrue.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): The hon. gentleman does not like us to tell him the truth. He repeats that about five or six times every session. We are very patient with him