

Mr. Mazankowski: That is quite a question, Mr. Speaker. Do I have a positive view of the railroad? It was this Government and I in 1979 who put together the five-year plan that saved the railroad. That is why they have a railroad today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: The matter is under review. There is no question about it. It is a serious question. The Hon. Member accurately pointed out the conflicting interests, whether we would have a variety of modes of transportation, and to what extent we would support them. At the present time the federal Government is supporting all modes of transportation—water, rail and air. The five-year program has expired. It will be reviewed in some fashion. All these things are being taken into consideration, having regard to the fact that it has been found that rail freight rates are non-compensatory and in violation of the National Transportation Act. It is a reality with which we have to deal.

● (1620)

Also, there is the reality that as long as rates stay low, we need to be supporting to a very significant extent water shipments as well as rail shipments. We view the railway as an important mode of transportation for Newfoundland. Otherwise, we would not have put together a salvaging package in 1979. We are working toward achieving that as well at a future period of time.

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, at first I was not sure whether I would be speaking on this motion of the Liberals which reads:

That this House condemns the Government for its indifference and negligence toward Atlantic Canada, especially with regard to regional industrial development, fisheries and transportation.

Not being a specialist in regional development, fisheries and transportation, and not having very much personal familiarity with the Atlantic provinces, I thought perhaps I would just listen. However, although my acquaintance with the Atlantic provinces is limited to having visited some friends in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia two or three times and having visited my son in Newfoundland two or three times, it is not that on which I am relying. I want to speak today on the question of housing. Although not a major issue raised in the motion, I believe it is a matter to be considered.

The Minister spoke this morning, as did the Minister from St. John's, whining as they usually do about all the problems they inherited from the previous Government. It was understandable hearing that in November, but we have had November, December, January, February, March, April and now May. It is becoming less and less credible to have them blame all the things they are not doing on the previous Government. It is particularly inappropriate in the matter of the housing program.

Last year the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), who was then Leader of the Opposition, bragged about his Party's policy in the matter of co-op housing. He sent letters to all

Supply

kinds of people. This is the sort of thing he said during the election campaign, although he started before the campaign:

There are few matters of more importance to people than adequate housing for themselves and their families.

The Prime Minister has a genius for making a pompous statement about the obvious, such as that today is Friday. He said:

The Progressive Conservative Party finds it inexcusable that the Liberal Government should cut back the funds for the co-operative housing program. That they would do so without consideration for the thousands of Canadians who rely upon co-operatives for their shelter illustrates the emptiness of the Liberal rhetoric on their concern for social issues.

He does not just blast the Liberals. He went on to say:

Our Party is sensitive to the needs of Canadians and believes that co-operatives are a necessary element of any housing program. They provide Canadians who otherwise would not be able to afford their own homes with independence, security and a sense of community spirit.

He winds up the paragraph by saying:

Co-operative housing will continue to have a priority in Progressive Conservative policy for housing.

That is a lot of balderdash. A lot of people suspected it at the time. Now the Prime Minister and his Cabinet have proved it. The co-operative program was slashed unjustifiably by the previous Government. It has been further slashed in direct violation of those promises by the present Government. People who are in difficulty over their housing are left to fend for themselves by this Government, as by the previous Government.

One matter that has come to my attention since I undertook the housing portfolio for my Party is the situation in Labrador City as a result of the massive lay-offs there by the Iron Ore Company. I have here an October 1983 task force report. It was a task force of the Newfoundland Legislature to inquire into the socio-economic problems in Labrador west. It refers to the extremely difficult situation for individuals in that community left by the long-term shut-down of the Iron Ore Company operation there. The provincial Government task force stated:

Financing for houses has been by conventional mortgages, most of which are insured either through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation or through a private mortgage insurance company. It is significant that borrowers did not seem to know at the time of borrowing by whom they were insured and what the future implications would be if they failed to meet their payments. As will be clear from this report, private sector mortgage insurance, with its right to sue, is seriously deficient for remote, one-industry towns.

There are other references to that problem, but I will jump to page 16 in which the report makes these points:

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the several hundred workers who permanently lost their jobs in Schefferville—

Schefferville was owned by the same company, the Iron Ore Company of Canada.

—received reasonable financial indemnification, but the one thousand or so workers who permanently have lost their jobs in Labrador City have received nothing comparable. The difference is glaring, and the Government should try to influence the companies—

That is the provincial Government and the Iron Ore Company of which the Prime Minister was the head until recently. He went on: