

Housing

land of milk and honey, I do not know why the people of British Columbia, Alberta and neighbouring provinces did not all flock into this Socialistic Utopia which the hon. gentleman eventually left with disastrous consequences. He finally became pragmatic and left the province. I shall not refer to his seat, because he changes it so often that in ten years I have not been able to keep track of his latest riding.

If the Minister without Portfolio from the province of Manitoba is one of the more fortunate Canadians who does not have to concern himself about owning a home, who does not have to concern himself with all the day-to-day problems of earning a living, it is all the more to his credit that he has given up a life with a very leisurely pace, sought election, and come to the House of Commons to meet some Socialists. The Minister without Portfolio has shown by his performance here that he cares for his fellow man regardless of his situation in life.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): I have not seen any of it.

Mr. Mackasey: Someone today alluded to the fact that possibly the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) could not understand anything about poverty since he comes from a wealthy family in the riding of Mount Royal. I am a little disappointed at the hon. member's contribution, because the hon. gentleman who made it does not usually make this type of attack. I have never had to resort to it, and I do not know why he had to do so. I say in all sincerity that it will be a sad day when the House of Commons is limited to members who, for one reason or another, have an income of so high and no higher.

• (6:40 p.m.)

To accuse the Prime Minister of Canada of not being aware of the social problems of this country simply because he is a very well educated man, simply because he represents a wealthy riding and simply because he is wealthy himself, indicates a flagrant ignorance of the background of the Prime Minister. There is no man in this house who has devoted more of his time, more of his money, and more of his talents to the poor and to the labour class as well as to the trade unions of this country than he did in the 1950's when he and one or two other people had the courage and the nerve to stand up to Mr. Duplessis, not only for the unions but, as the leader of the New Democratic party knows, in the

case against the Jehovah's Witnesses. So I do not think the Prime Minister of this country has to take second place to the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) who just sat down.

We thought that this debate would be on housing, and I will say in all sincerity that members of the opposition, who are in general a pretty responsible group, have stuck to the issue of housing. This is a house of debate. The hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) made what I thought was a very pertinent, honest and useful contribution to the debate as a member from an urban riding. The purpose of the House of Commons is to debate and criticize without resorting to personalities. But unfortunately the New Democratic party has chosen to fight this issue not on the question of housing but on the question of the constitution.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): That is what the Minister of Transport resigned over.

Mr. Mackasey: The Minister of Transport did resign over that, and I might say about him that he is a most honourable man; he is a man of integrity and a man who had the courage to resign on a matter of principle, which has happened all too infrequently in Canadian history.

In speaking about the constitution—and that is the subject on which the New Democratic party has decided to fight—I am at a tremendous disadvantage in one way and at an advantage in another way. I come from a part of the country where people are perhaps more preoccupied with the constitution than the more pragmatic English speaking people in the rest of the country. Perhaps the reason for this is that I have one foot in each culture and I get exasperated with both. I can understand the average Canadian's concern about housing. I used to be parliamentary secretary to the minister who was concerned with housing, and I can remember making a speech here on that issue and referring to the red tape which prevented public housing in my riding. I remember personally starting the agitation for a project because someone asked me why I did not stop talking and do something about it. I did something about it in March of 1967. Here we are in April of 1969 and my city is just now turning over the sod for the building of a home for senior citizens. At that time there was no apparent reason in the world for holding up the project except