

Housing

the things that are enumerated under section 91”.

So much for the one nation platform, Mr. Speaker, of which the Prime Minister spoke so much and which, as the Minister of Transport said, is not what the Canadian people had been led to believe it would be. The British North America Act will be with us for some time yet. Ways have been found for over 100 years to attack problems under the present constitution through federal-provincial co-operation. It is time for the Prime Minister to come back to earth. The country cannot stand still. Problems will not wait for the constitution to be reviewed or revised.

● (3:10 p.m.)

The constitution of this country has always created difficulties. But it has never been an impossible stumbling block and it is not one now if the Prime Minister will seek to co-operate with the provinces. There is more at stake here than the willingness of the government to act on housing, urgent and important though housing is. What is at issue here is the willingness of the government to act at all to meet urgent and emerging problems such as those referred to by the Minister of Transport which include problems of pollution and inflation.

Let us be perfectly clear, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Transport is saying, in effect, that the reason we have not had an adequate housing policy in Canada—and he resigned because of this—is that the concept of confederation the Prime Minister has imposed on the cabinet does not allow the federal government to deal effectively with the modern problems facing this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: Presumably, that concept of the federal system is too rigid and too narrow to allow Ottawa to act effectively to solve problems of pollution, inflation or other similar problems. We had known that there had not been action, but we were told that action would come. Now, the man who sat in the house as the principal lieutenant of the Prime Minister, and who was the Deputy Prime Minister of Canada, suggest that the inaction of the government is not due to delay but, instead, to design. He has suggested that the government has no intention of acting.

The Minister's resignation raises serious doubts about the plans of the government for the country. We have been told that long

[Mr. Stanfield.]

range plans are being launched and developed in the Privy Council office and that we are hovering at the very edge of an exciting time of action. We might almost call it phase two, Mr. Speaker. The myth has been spread that there is a united and modern government plotting a new course for Canada. If that myth has not been exploded it has at least been badly shell shocked.

I want to end by saying that the minister who has resigned has a record of service in government. He had the courage and the ability to translate ideas and concepts into reality. While hon. members on this side of the house sometimes, indeed frequently, disagreed fundamentally with his concepts, nevertheless there was never any lack of admiration for his energy and for the ability he applied to the programs he was attempting to implement.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: He served honourably and faithfully in the governments of three prime ministers. He entered public life as a young man, and he is a young man still. Whether he is in politics or out of politics, I sincerely hope that our country will continue to benefit from his dedication and service. His resignation at this time brings discredit to this government, which is the poorer for it.

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, we listened carefully to the remarks of the leader of the New Democratic party (Mr. Douglas), of the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield).

This sub-amendment moved by the New Democratic party is to the effect that, and I shall have to quote it in English because I was only given the English version of the motion:

[English]

—for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely the resignation of the Minister of Transport because of the failure of the government to agree to take action to increase the housing supply in Canada,—

[Translation]

As was so well said by the Prime Minister, the leader of the New Democratic party talked about a lot of things, except housing. The Prime Minister blamed the leader of the New Democratic party for not quoting figures. I intend to provide the Prime Minister with figures which speak for themselves and