

among both government bureaucrats and members opposite.

It seems as well that regional development organizations and organizations promoting economic development like the FBDB are inoculated against involvement with co-ops because when you look at the regulations, the pro-active activities they undertake, co-ops and community development organizations very often seem to be the last thing on their mind.

• (1710)

There are a number of specific co-operative initiatives that I would like to outline as being very worthy of public sector support.

First of all, in the area of co-operative housing, we have the sad spectacle of a promise the government made to build 5,000 co-op housing units a year. Has this promise been kept? No, Mr. Speaker. We are now down to about 1,500 units a year. These units are being built under a constant barrage of criticism within this House, misplaced criticism that could only be politically motivated by members of both the government and the political opposition. They attempt to use the fact that several members of Parliament have been involved in organizing and maintaining co-op housing and are trying to use this to discredit the co-op housing movement in general.

When you look at the record, CMHC's own studies show that co-op housing is by far the most cost-effective way to provide housing for Canadians who are now sleeping in streets, sleeping 20 to a home in northern Canada, and in desperate need of moderately priced and affordable housing.

At the same time, I do not hear anything from these members attacking the fact that we subsidize luxury condominiums by an average of \$20,000 per unit through the MURB Program.

A second initiative that I think is very worthy of support is the whole area of worker co-ops. A study done in Atlantic Canada showed that worker co-ops use only approximately \$1,500 in capital per job to provide jobs through the formation of worker co-ops. At the same time, the government's operation ACOA spends an average of \$150,000 to create a single job; that is \$1,500 as opposed to \$150,000 when you compare worker co-ops to the jobs that are created through ACOA.

Private Members' Business

It is no wonder that the premiers of Atlantic Canada have noted this phenomenon. They are, at this very time, organizing themselves to provide a major initiative in Atlantic Canada to provide jobs, to develop communities through the development of not only worker co-ops but community based co-ops of all sorts.

I am very pleased to see this and I commend the premiers of Atlantic Canada for recognizing the tremendous potential of worker co-ops and other co-operatives.

At the same time, in other parts of Canada, we see a massive job loss through free trade and economic decisions related to free trade. We see plants being shut down that are perfectly profitable, where those jobs could go on for a long time if it were based only on the economics of the particular plant or enterprise. These kind of enterprises are surely ripe for worker co-operative ownership.

In that respect, I would like to commend my colleague from Sault Ste. Marie for bringing forward a private member's bill that would enhance worker ownership in this country and make it much more feasible to undertake worker ownership. I think this is certainly one of the key factors or mechanisms that we could be using against the very sad trend toward job loss and the loss of economic futures in many communities.

In fact, I would like to say to government members that when the government promised adjustment mechanisms to cope with the fall-out from free trade, surely pilot projects in the area of worker co-operatives are something the government could and should be looking at very closely.

I would also like to say that the government might well look at some of the proposals made by the Canadian Co-operative Association for a worker co-op investment fund and the establishment of worker co-op enterprise centres to spur the development of worker co-ops in this country.

A third area where co-operative development has a bright future and could help economic development is in the whole area of the resource sector. There are farming, fishing and forestry communities from coast to coast in this country under tremendous economic stress and see themselves as having very little economic future if present trends continue. I personally undertook an economic consultation tour in my own constituency recently. My own constituency combines all of those