

At that time I should have said Yellowknife.

—small apartments are renting for as much as \$400 a month, and in view of the fact the Department of Public Works have vacant in the Yukon 130 homes, 200 detached homes and some apartments, and some of the homes have been vacant for as long as five years, and in view of the fact there is a regulation . . . of the Department of Public Works not to rent to employees who are local people who reside in the area, will the Prime Minister change the restrictive and discriminatory rule and permit local people to rent these vacant homes and apartments to ease the critical housing shortage . . .

In a supplementary I also said:

Is the Prime Minister aware that the same problem pertains in Fort Smith, Hay River and Inuvik and that the local people feel that if persons are from the south they can get accommodation whereas if they are from the local area they are denied accommodation? Will the Prime Minister also direct his attention to this and have this very serious problem cleared up?

You, Mr. Speaker, can appreciate the critical housing situation in the Northwest Territories, and in particular in Yellowknife, Hay River, Inuvik and Fort Smith where housing has reached a crisis stage. People are paying exorbitant rents for apartments while there are vacant apartments, homes, and detached houses which are owned by the Department of Public Works, in respect of which there is a rule which states that they can be rented only to people who come from the south to work in the Northwest Territories. If this is the case, and it must be the case because my colleague from the Northwest Territories is greatly concerned and exercised about it, then it is high time the Minister of Public Works set in motion changes in the regulations concerning these homes.

Many times I have heard the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Danson) say that housing should be a basic right for all Canadians and that it should be available at affordable prices. If that is the case and if it is the philosophy of the government, and we have a crisis situation in certain areas of the Northwest Territories, then it is incumbent upon the minister to change those regulations so that those vacant properties may be rented to the people in the area.

If there is anything worse than discrimination it is the feeling people in the Northwest Territories have that the people from the south get better privileges than the people from the north and the local area. This has been the thrust of the rule which applies at the moment. I would hope that the parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Turner) would get up and say there are vacancies in respect of homes, apartments, and so on in the north, that there is this restriction which has been working against the people in the local area, and that he will see that changes are made to ease the housing problem and also ease the feeling of discrimination the people in the north have. I look forward to the answer by the parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Charles Turner (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Public Works is responsible for the administration of pool housing in the north and can only answer for units which are connected with this program. Other northern housing programs are administered by the individual departments involved.

In the Northwest Territories there is a total of 782 pool housing units available. At the present time there are 51

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units vacant and awaiting the arrival of known occupants. An additional 37 units are vacant, with no known requirements. This represents a vacancy factor of less than 5 per cent, which is considered reasonable in this program when consideration is given to seasonal work and other fluctuations.

● (2220)

In Whitehorse there are 84 houses available of which three are vacant at the present time. The figures change from month to month, but three to five vacant at any one time is the average.

The regulation to which the hon. member for Broadview (Mr. Gilbert) referred is T.B. No. 552212 pool housing policy and procedures. This regulation, we understand, is being considered for review by Treasury Board officials.

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE—ALLEGED REDUCTION IN EXPENDITURES FOR FORCE—MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock): Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to speak on behalf of a beleaguered group which, more than any other institution in Canada, represents the qualities of dignity, fairness, perseverance and responsibility to the people of the world. I speak of course of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Whereas in other countries the police are easily passed off as "cops" and "pigs", in Canada we still speak proudly of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Whereas in bygone days the force could devote all of their attention to getting their man, today they have to be on their guard lest some man gets them. I speak not of the criminal who, by commitment, has devoted his life and energies to fight against the forces of law and order; I speak rather of the governments and their bureaucrats who make it more and more difficult for the police to do their work, who make the police officers the victims of an unnecessary power struggle. I speak on behalf of the people of Canada who are the victims, the innocent bystanders who become the victims of this power struggle. Let me illustrate.

There is a well known understanding among the police forces across Canada that there is a 6 per cent guideline limiting the expansion of RCMP facilities province by province. Hon. members must understand of course that this is not related in any way to the crime rate in any given province, it is not related to the present understaffing of the police forces in any specific area, and it is not related to the requests of the forces in these local areas, but rather it is an arbitrary decision agreed upon by the cabinet which ignores the crime needs of communities faced by mounting lawlessness and mounting juvenile delinquency, and that in itself becomes a crime in its own right.

It is not enough that the police force has to fight crime; it now must also fight for its own existence. Then there is the trade off power brokerage between the federal government and the provincial governments.

Right now the federal government pays 50 per cent of the expense of maintaining the first four officers in any given community, and 25 per cent of the expense of maintaining all the other officers beyond the first four. But the contract for the RCMP, especially in British Columbia,