

Private Members' Business

The situation is the same with housing. There are lists as long as your arm, Mr. Speaker, for chronic-care beds, for co-operative and low income housing. Again these are areas which are high in employment.

I mentioned the grade separations at level crossings which were cancelled. We used to have a revolving fund of \$10 million a year, but that was cancelled since 1984. We kill more people at level crossings than those who die of AIDS in any given year. I am completely in support of all the efforts, the medical research, treatment, comfort and assistance to those suffering from that terrible disease, but we killed more people at level crossings last year than those who died of AIDS.

I cannot get anybody excited about that. How come? Why not? God knows there is a need to improve the efficiency of our transportation systems and the safety factor for our public.

There is a variety of ways to do this and this is only one of many, but I submit that full employment is the only way we are going to defeat deficits, national debt or provincial debt. We have gone through this many times before in our history. The problem has been that on many occasions we have had a recession or depression and then some more recessions. As far as I am concerned the present one we are in, in many aspects, is as bad or worse than the depression of the 1930s. All the nation does is sit and wring its hands. It cries and screams about the debt and the deficits.

If we put one million of those million and a half unemployed to work they would pay taxes. The municipalities should be able to afford financially to do a lot of things with their infrastructure, their sewer and water systems, streets, roads and bridges. Something should be done in the way of improvements to our national railway system. There is so much out there that one would have to be blind not to see what needs to be done.

We have proven this many times before. I recommend to my colleagues a little book called *The Unnecessary Evil* by Professor Reuben Bellan of the University of Manitoba. Please get it from the library and read it, because it throws into a cocked hat all the conventional ways in which governments tried to deal with increasing deficits and increasing debts.

When I mentioned that we paid for the entire Second World War ourselves without any foreign investment, that is where I got that information. Nobody has ever

refuted that and nobody can. The money is there. Unless we require financial institutions to put it up and the provinces and the federal government pay at least half of the interest costs so that municipalities can afford to draw upon those funds, nothing is going to happen. We will sit and muddle our way through. Too many places and too many people will be neglected in terms of the kinds of public, municipal infrastructure they must have and should have.

I hope in the three hours allotted for this debate that my colleagues on all sides will consider the national objective of full employment and this motion as one of the many ways to achieve that. We did it during wartime. We can do it in peacetime by declaring war on poverty, unemployment and insufficient and inadequate housing.

• (1520)

The fact that we have tens of thousands of people in the north living in slum homes without sewer and water or electricity is incredible and unnecessary. That applies to the four or five million Canadians who lack basic fundamental human rights: the right to a decent roof over their heads, the right to a job, the right to good health care and the right to good municipal services. Those rights are being denied to too many people in our country right now. My motion is one of the ways to help correct that.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, I might say I am pleased today to rise in this House to respond to the motion of my hon. friend from Regina—Lumsden.

As the House will know, I have had occasions in the past to share many debates on many important issues with my hon. friend from the opposite side of the House.

The member opposite from Regina—Lumsden has once again spoken eloquently on this subject. This is no surprise to anyone who has listened to him over these many years in this House of Commons. This Chamber, I might add, has been in awe of his prestigious memory regarding transportation issues.

I can speak from experience on my own part from the many years we have spent on opposite sides in the transportation committee. I would use the phrase a worthy opponent as being the most appropriate way of describing our relationship.