

● (5:50 p.m.)

As in the cities, there is demand for various types of accommodation in smaller centres also, but the financing of such accommodation is very, very difficult to obtain. In many communities only the banks and Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation will finance housing of any sort. It is also evident there are more CMHC programs available for cities than for smaller centres.

If one should try to borrow money for a housing development from a trust company or life insurance company, for example, one is given the cold shoulder. A number of months ago I had an opportunity to see just how much the cards are stacked against the growth of smaller centres. A person who was interested in developing a number of housing units in a town in my riding invited me to attend with him at the office of a major Canadian mortgage corporation in Edmonton. We were invited into the mortgage manager's office and he proceeded to tell us that his firm had vast amounts of money available for investment and housing purposes. He displayed a very lively interest in the project as it was described to him by my constituent, who saved to the end the fact that this particular project happened to be in a town of some 3,000 people situated some miles outside the city. When this fact was made known to the manager, his attitude changed remarkably and he simply stated that no funds were available for mortgages outside the city.

This is not an isolated instance. I have experienced similar examples during my law practice in rural areas of Alberta. It is a very common occurrence for financing for very worth-while projects to be refused simply because the projects are situated in a community that is not one of the major urban areas of Canada.

The problem of providing housing to growing small communities appears to prevail throughout Canada. A Calgary firm, Atco Industries, has had a great deal of experience in providing prefabricated housing for resource communities, not only in Canada but throughout the world. In an article written in January of last year the president of that firm, Mr. R. D. Southern, said the following:

While the problems of providing low cost acceptable housing to isolated and urban areas are largely similar, one major difference precludes any sensible plan for providing housing to the population presently moving into and required for industrialization and expansion of Canada's isolated northern regions. That problem is an almost complete lack of ability to provide mortgaging for normal residential purchases. This inability is not hard to understand, when the sparseness of population and vastness of the isolated regions are considered, but it also extends to the small towns that are the nucleus of northern and isolated area growth.

It is incongruous, in a country like Canada, which has been and should be committed to the industrialization and expansion of its northern territories—

and, I might add, other areas capable of sustaining economic growth—

—for the future economic benefit of all Canadians, that rather than providing incentives to locate in these areas, there is a complete and devastating road block to the provision of a dignified class of housing.

The Address—Mr. Sulatycky

I should like to emphasize the last statement, that there is a complete and devastating roadblock to the provision of a dignified class of housing in these small communities. This extends not only to housing; these communities run into difficulty in arranging financing for such things as services, the ordinary requirements of any community. As well, businesses have difficulty in arranging financing for commercial expansion. I believe this applies equally to growing small communities in other parts of Canada as well as to communities in northern Canada.

As I said, the problem does not stop at housing; in the area of commercial development availability of financing is just as critical. I have had many businessmen in a number of small communities tell me that they have run into obstacle after obstacle in attempting to obtain capital for expansion purposes. Other businessmen in large cities have the necessary capital made readily available to them, but it seems that when a small town entrepreneur comes to draw from the well, it suddenly runs dry.

These are problems that we must solve soon. In solving them we may very well help to solve some of the problems in the large cities. But we will not solve them by letting current economic and technological advances take their own course. It is certain that the end result of that course will be a greater and greater concentration of population in fewer and fewer locations. I do not think this is necessary or desirable. It is certainly not inevitable.

I find comfort in the words of the distinguished American public servant, John W. Gardner, who served as secretary of health, education and welfare in President Johnson's administration in 1965. Before I refer to his comments, Mr. Speaker, perhaps this would be a good opportunity to call it six o'clock.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Does the House agree to call it six o'clock?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): It being six o'clock, I do now leave the Chair. The sitting will resume at eight o'clock p.m.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

Mr. Sulatycky: Mr. Speaker, before we rose for dinner I was saying that it is neither inevitable nor desirable that all, or even an extremely large portion, of our population be crowded into only the very largest cities. I was about to quote the words of John W. Gardner, former United States secretary of health, education and welfare, who said:

Within the past 20 years the urge on the part of large numbers of people to pile into cities has become anachronistic. For ten thousand years people had excellent reason to crowd them-