

stocks on George's Bank have been depleted to such an extent that scientists argue it is almost impossible for haddock to replenish themselves by natural means. After allowing the Russians and others to overfish, to plunder our stocks of haddock on George's Bank until there is nothing left for anybody to fish, these countries now agree to exercise some control. Why would not the Russians and the fishermen of other countries agree to this earlier? The fact is that today the stocks have been depleted to such an extent that it is not economically feasible to fish for haddock on George's Bank. Why was not the Minister of Fisheries able to enter into negotiations with the Russians and other ICNAF countries to bring about some form of management control over haddock resources on George's Bank? Before I leave the subject of fisheries, Mr. Speaker, I would like to impress upon the House and the government the need for immediate action to bring about international agreement whereby our fish stocks will be conserved and the danger of depletion brought to an end. I believe this can be achieved, but it will require great interest and pretty strong negotiation on the part of the Canadian government.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I hope the government will give the fishing industry the attention and priority it deserves. That industry may not mean much to the economy of people living in Don Valley and other parts of Upper Canada, but to certain parts of Canada, including the province I have the honour to represent, it means a great deal. We have a population of a little over half a million people, and 125,000 of our people derive a living either directly or indirectly from the fisheries. Is it any wonder that we are so anxious to have the government take the necessary action to prevent the total collapse of that industry? If the cod fishing industry fails, if we stand by and allow a continuation of what is happening, it is quite conceivable that within five years codfish will be a rare delicacy. The effect upon the economy of Newfoundland would be terrible.

I was pleased to read in the Speech from the Throne the government's intention to reorganize its urban activities under the direction of a full-time minister of urban affairs and housing. Housing, Mr. Speaker, plays an important role in economic development. To ignore the importance of housing and urban renewal, when considering development, is to ignore an important ingredient behind economic growth. In the Atlantic provinces, and especially in Newfoundland, housing stocks leave a great deal to be desired both as to quality and as to volume. While it is nice for CMHC and the DBS to bring out a forecast of housing needs for the next ten or 15 years, our prospects in the Atlantic area of attaining the desired target are very gloomy. Our prospects of ever attaining the number of homes suggested by CMHC as being required are very remote indeed, taking into account the Newfoundland economy, the financial condition of the Newfoundland government which is forecast and the limited financial capability of the vast majority of wage earners in that province to buy homes.

To those of us who have taken an interest in the housing situation in Canada, particularly in Atlantic

The Address—Mr. Carter

Canada, it would appear that there is room for flexibility and experimentation by CMHC. The problems of the Atlantic region are somewhat different from those confronting most of Canada and, we feel, merit special attention. If I may be allowed to overgeneralize, the government's program to date appears to have been conceived to overcome the pockets of poor housing that exist amidst general urban affluence, while the problem in Atlantic Canada, especially in Newfoundland, is one of pockets of affluence in the midst of general poverty. In this regard we must stress the importance of taking regional differences into consideration.

• (5:20 p.m.)

A housing program policy should fit within the framework of a general social and economic policy, in which case the Atlantic area should be given top priority on the government's list for future expenditures on housing. A government that is seriously concerned with present housing problems and is interested in providing a better quality of life for all Canadians, should start showing its concern by making home ownership available to our wage earners who are on the bottom half of the income level. As the first step toward reaching that goal I would respectfully recommend to the government that it abolish the sales tax on building materials. The sales tax on building materials adds an estimated \$950 to the price of a modest, three-bedroom bungalow. A government which continues to impose such tax is not serious in its professed desire to conquer Canada's housing problem.

If it is not financially feasible to remove the tax in its entirety, consideration should be given to a gradual approach starting, possibly, with a system of rebates on the amount of tax on materials used in houses costing \$20,000 or less. This, of course, would have the desired effect of helping people in middle and low-income brackets who are buying homes in the \$20,000 or less bracket. Let us face it; the average person who is at the middle or bottom half of the income level in Canada is the fellow who is buying a house for \$20,000 or less. Such a rebate system should be administered so that the reduced cost resulting from the elimination of the sales tax is deducted from the purchase price of the house at the time of sale.

The government should consider the possibility of subsidizing interest rates to support home ownership for low-income families, including those involved in co-op housing. A subsidy program should be devised to help families who really need it. I am not too concerned about subsidizing interest rates or abolishing the sales tax on homes that cost \$30,000, \$40,000 or \$50,000 because I feel that the people buying that type of house can well afford to pay the sales tax and the interest charged by the various lending institutions. I agree with the principle of building societies, as well as providing some form of tax relief on mortgage interest payments. I see no reason why a government sincerely interested in trying to solve the housing problem in this country would not agree to some kind of tax relief on mortgage interest payments on homes, again within the \$20,000 or less bracket.