

The Address—Mr. Stanfield

There is no recognition in the Speech from the Throne of anything like the degree of co-ordination of policy which the Economic Council of Canada recommends. We will hold this government to its commitments. I want to say that so long as the government of Canada continues a stop-start policy, starting the economy up and running into excessive inflation, tightening things up and slowing things down, thus killing any development there may be in those areas suffering from economic disparity, so long as the government does not do better than that with regard to anti-inflationary programs there will be no rapid cure or even substantial improvement in economic disparity.

Then, Mr. Speaker, we come to the problem of housing which is related to poverty but, of course, is a much broader question. There is no need to elaborate on the failure of government policy in recent years in the field of housing. The hardships inflicted on thousands of families as a result of rapidly climbing rents are well known. Even the city of Ottawa has asked the province for the power to control rents. These conditions are directly attributable to economic conditions in the country.

The Economic Council of Canada estimated there was a need for an average of 190,000 new units a year between 1966 and 1970. In order to meet this goal we are going to need over 221,000 homes each year in 1969 and 1970. We can hope for the best but in view of the performance of this government in recent years we really have not too much foundation for hope. The Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer) is going off with his task force. Again, I hope for the best. I am sending a representative to keep me informed and do what he can to help in the development of government policy. They seem to need some help. When the Minister of Transport was asked whether he thought this task force would reveal anything new he said that he had a sneaking suspicion or intuition that it would. I pity the people of a country who must rely on the sneaking suspicions of the Minister of Transport.

● (4:20 p.m.)

One wonders about this task force, when Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation is going to subsidize another, more promising effort, the conference sponsored by the Canadian Welfare Council in Toronto next month, and there will be people representing the official opposition there, too. This task force of the Minister of Transport is a one-shot effort. We have suggested a continuing task force with provincial and municipal

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representation, able to take account of different regional needs, different regional problems and different regional opportunities, but this has been brushed aside. The experience with previous regional seminars sponsored by the former minister is not very encouraging; we know that.

Then, of course, we have the question of the phenomenal interest rates that existed a few months ago and have trapped thousands of Canadians into being committed to paying astronomical interest rates for years because of the errors of judgment made by the Liberal government in Ottawa.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: When, in the course of the election campaign, I made a very modest suggestion, trying to afford a little relief to these people who were trapped by the folly of the government, the reply of the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) was that my suggestion would upset Bay street. If this is the sort of basis which he uses for policy judgments, it is no wonder that his attitude with regard to Czechoslovakia and Nigeria has been so mechanical and insensitive. I am sorry the minister is not in his seat.

Mr. Woolliams: And not very sensible.

Mr. Stanfield: So far as Czechoslovakia is concerned the attitude of the government seems to be pretty well summed up in the admission of the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. MacEachen) last week that it was only a week before—I think on September 6—that he had instructions sent to his immigration people in Europe to render assistance to Czech refugees.

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): He is still trying to figure out Inverness.

Mr. Stanfield: It was a long time after Russia had invaded Czechoslovakia that the minister moved. This is a pretty good indication of the detachment of this government with regard to the problems of Czechoslovakian refugees. I say, Mr. Speaker, that Canadians are not at all proud of their government in this regard, and they are not all proud of the government's half-hearted response to the starvation and misery in Nigeria. Far from reassuring Canadians that we are pulling our weight in trying to alleviate this extreme tragedy, with genocide perhaps involved, the response of the Secretary of State for External Affairs to questions asked him in the House of Commons on the Friday last simply