

Housing

Mr. Rose: They are starting to reverse. That is what concerns us. The hon. member must believe, as the Frenchman said when he kissed the girl on the hand, "You have to make a start somewhere." I do not think making a start is an answer to our problem. The question is, who is doing what to whom?

Miss MacDonald: You wouldn't say that if you had women in your caucus.

Mr. Rose: That is very interesting coming from the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands. We have a few women in our caucus. You have even fewer in yours.

Miss MacDonald: You cannot even count.

An hon. Member: Try percentages.

Mr. Rose: A recent report of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation said that the housing starts for British Columbia were going to be down 8,000 units in 1982. That is an extremely serious matter for the people in an area where the housing starts are already too low.

What is that going to do for rents? I do not know if the minister really thinks that rents should go up in order to entice more people to build more rental accommodation.

Mr. Deans: Sure he does.

Mr. Rose: Unless rents somehow keep pace with the income increases of the average person, I do not think rent hikes will be the solution. We know that incomes have fallen behind the inflation rate now for five years in a row. The abolition of rent control is going to be particularly harmful to Canadians.

The minister says in this bill, essentially—it is unstated, it is said *sotto voce*, it is subliminal, it is a kind of implicit assumption—that if we would only allow the private sector to look after things, everything would be fine, that if the government would only get out of the housing business directly and maybe go into guaranteeing things and propping up things here and there, things would work out and we would do pretty well. I am not so sure that that is going to be the case.

What we need in this country is a mix of housing. We do not need just public housing, we do not need just private housing, because no matter how efficient the private sector is, and it is efficient, we have one of the best housebuilding industries in the world, more than that is needed.

I would like the government to take some of that 97-cent petroleum incentive program dollars it intends to give to the oil companies for punching holes in the Beaufort Sea, and give it to our housing industry and see how they would do it, with conservation measures and solar measures and heat pumps and all that kind of thing. That would create far more jobs. We need to review the kind of policies this government has been following.

Anyway, the government cannot just sneak out and leave the private sector to do it all alone. The private sector cannot do it. The reason it cannot do it basically is because of interest rates. Other people have highlighted that. It is not a sort of new

discovery by me and my party as far as interest rates are concerned.

I talked today to the spokesperson from the real estate board of the Lower Fraser Valley. He said to me, "We see the light at the end of the tunnel; we have some optimistic kinds of things happening now, especially in low-cost housing, low-cost private housing, but interest rates are the biggest impediment to progress."

As long as blind adherence to high interest rates prevails, I do not think anybody, the private or the public housing sector, is going to be able to solve housing problems. But, remember, the Tories and the Liberals do not disagree on high interest rates all that much.

On June 5 or June 6 of 1981, on a television program on CTV, the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) said, and I quote in part: "Yes, I would continue to back Mr. Bouey." This is our former finance minister from the Tory party. He said: "Yes, I would continue to back Mr. Bouey, he is doing his best on the monetary side, the interest rate and the money supply." And then Michael Wilson, Etobicoke-Centre, has no quarrel at all.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I would call it to the attention of the hon. member that the practice is not to refer to hon. members by name, but rather by the constituencies they represent.

Mr. Rose: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for referring to Michael Wilson. I should have said, that the hon. member for Etobicoke-Centre (Mr. Wilson), who is the critic on financial matters for the Conservative party, speaking before the Canadian Club, said that he agreed with the high interest rate of the government. He was telling us that the Conservatives would do nothing differently.

Mr. Taylor: That is a misquote.

Mr. Rose: A misquote? You are missing a lot. They are exactly the same. They are identical.

Mr. Taylor: It is just the opposite.

Mr. Rose: Just the opposite? They are both high-interest-rate parties. The Conservative Party is the western wing of the Liberal Party.

Mr. Taylor: How can you say that?

Mr. Rose: I guess you have forgotten the numbers. I say the Tories have been voting with the Liberals 20 times and we have been voting otherwise.

An hon. Member: They are the supporters of separatism in Quebec.

Mr. Rose: What the CMHC has told us, essentially, Mr. Speaker, is that we can predict continued high interest rates, a continuing decline in housing starts. We already have a problem, and the minister's own department says that if we