

Rochdale College

Obviously, the minister is doing all in his power. As a matter of fact, he did not say that Toronto government members met with him a long time ago on this issue and he is co-operating in every way to try to clear up this matter.

Mr. Paproski: That is not true.

Mr. Danson: Mr. Speaker, I have been accused of not telling the truth. I would like the hon. member to withdraw that remark.

Mr. Paproski: I did not say you didn't say the truth. I said it was not true.

Mr. Danson: Fine. The hon. member is withdrawing his statement and I accept his withdrawal.

Mr. Paproski: I do not withdraw anything.

Mr. Danson: Let us not take up any more time with these silly interjections.

This was an experiment that failed. It resulted in a cesspool, a morass of drugs and slothfulness which none of us can accept and which we want to see cleaned up. It is a black mark on the legitimate co-operative housing projects which we all support, and it is a black mark on the legitimate students who are trying to further their education in imaginative ways. It really sets their case back. I am very impressed by a similar project in Toronto about which we have not heard anything, namely, the Neil Wysick College at Ryerson. They have their problems, but the students have anticipated them and have approached many members with a reasonable solution for curing them. They are trying their best. I believe these people are paying \$100,000 in municipal taxes a year, something which Rochdale is not doing at all.

An hon. Member: What about the finance report on that one?

Mr. Danson: I think these people at Neil Wysick should be treated with sympathy and we should ensure that they can carry out the job which they are determined to do.

I suggest that we back up the minister in his efforts to get Rochdale cleaned up as quickly as possible under the law, and we should back up the efforts of the receiver. I should like to see an alternate use made of this building. It is a well constructed building which has been damaged badly, but it can be refurbished as the minister said when he was quoting from his own letter. I would like to see us carry on another type of experiment that has been highly successful, namely, the setting up of senior citizens' housing such as has been done in the central part of Toronto. We have excellent senior citizens' housing on Yonge Street downtown in the core of the city. The other day I met an old army friend who is living in one of these homes and he told me how delightful it was to be able to walk to the shops across the street, or down to the military institute to see his friends, and to be able to live in dignity at a nominal rent.

I should like to see Rochdale converted to housing for senior citizens. I know it can be refurbished. This would be a constructive use for it. Our experimentation in this area has paid off. I have not heard of any drug or sex

[Mr. Danson.]

scandals in senior citizens' homes to date, and I think we should take our chances on that. We are deeply concerned and I know the minister is concerned. I hope we find a technique within the law to get this place cleaned out. It is a cancer on the whole student movement in Canada, and certainly in Toronto.

We will not eliminate all the problems. The drug problem will still exist; the slothfulness will still exist. It will not be institutionalized, and we will not be subsidizing it. Society will pay for it in other ways, but that is not the object of Rochdale College. It should not provide low-cost housing. I read a report in the newspaper that a woman said, "You cannot move us out, and I cannot afford to live anywhere else." That is a tragedy, I admit, but that is not the object of Rochdale College. I do not think there is a simple and easy way to solve this problem. It must be done forcefully and within the law. We must make proper, constructive use of this facility to which a large amount of federal funds has gone, and other funds as well.

In a sense, the city of Toronto has been forced to forgo taxation. I think the place should be put back on the road and put into constructive social use such as we have seen in the case of other senior citizens' homes of which we do not have nearly enough. I think we have an opportunity here to support the minister and the actions he takes to see that this place is cleaned up and is put to constructive use. The minister refers in his letter to "alternate use". I suggest that the best alternate use would be senior citizens' housing, for example of the type on Yonge Street opposite Eaton's College Street which is run almost like a private hotel for senior citizens at nominal rents, which gives them a new lease on life and allows them to live as complete human beings.

I believe this is what government encouragement and government loans are for. I do not think we should get out of co-operative housing for students when it is run responsibly. We have learnt a lesson, and if we experiment again in this area we should not leave ourselves open to the sort of abuse which has taken place in Rochdale College. It is a place that all the people I know in Toronto have condemned, and I think all the people of Toronto would support this clean-up and changeover.

● (1800)

Mr. Ron Atkey (St. Paul's): Mr. Speaker, I think the theme of today's debate should be, "Oh what a difference a private member's motion can make." The minister's letter of March 1 is an excellent one: it sets forth the points very clearly; it demonstrates the ability of the minister at long last to take some action. The tragedy of it all is that that letter could have been written in exactly the same terms a year and a half ago.

The parliamentary secretary to the minister, who is in the House at present, wrote a letter in which he said the interim receiver was appointed on September 14, 1972. At that time the Clark company was appointed interim receiver and manager. Notwithstanding the fact that the action was still proceeding and no foreclosure order had been made, it would have been entirely in order for the first mortgagee, in this case CMHC, to indicate its views to the interim receiver—those views which were indicated very clearly in the letter of March 1, 1974. I point out that