

The Address—Mr. Allmand

are familiar with this program, but it was to upgrade dilapidated housing in communities, housing that was falling down. Instead of what happened in the past where we saw steam shovels and steam rollers destroying buildings to make room for parking lots, this program was to try to rehabilitate and restore older housing. This program, however, will be cut by 25 per cent; \$29.4 million. I do not know whether the private sector will pick that up for a profit motive, whether it will go into rehabilitation of older housing for those people living there now and not for a lot of trendy people who move into these areas.

I am reminded that my time is rapidly coming to a close.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Allmand: There is so much to be said on the subject, but I suppose I had better get to the final point I want to make.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Allmand: I have tried to make many points with Government Members. We know we will not win many votes in this House, and I say this very seriously, but we do hope to win some of the debates and turn public opinion against what the Government is trying to do. We are hoping people will start to listen and really examine these cuts, and that Tory members will start hearing from their constituents about some of these things—about rehabilitation of old housing, about the cuts in the cultural agencies, about cuts in research and development and about cuts in social housing. Perhaps then the Government will then change its mind.

I will have to make another speech on another amendment to this Speech from the Throne, but now I want to move an amendment to the Speech from the Throne as follows: I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Outremont (Mrs. Pépin); the following amendment:

That this House regrets that your advisors not only failed to make open government a high priority but also, in their actions, have sought to reverse the direction of previous administrations by severely restricting the availability of information on decision-making in government and by attempting to inhibit access to both the elected and non-elected participants in that process.

Let me refer briefly to some of the things that have happened in the restriction of information. Of course, we have had questions by the New Democratic Party and by our Leader about releasing the figures on jobs that would be lost as a result of the financial program brought in last Thursday. The Conservatives refused to give us that information.

We have other examples. We have the new chiefs of staff, the commissars, who are restricting the flow of information from their departments to Members of Parliament and to the press. We have orders from the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) that people in his department should not discuss matters of that department with the press. We have an individual in the Privy Council Office who had been giving some information and was told to shut up and not to talk to reporters any more. Then we have the Government Lobby declared out of bounds to reporters. For years and years, even under the previous Conservative government of Mr. Clark,

reporters were allowed in. Now for the first time no reporters are allowed in the Government Lobby. We have this excessive restriction on the flow of information. On the one hand the Government talks about consultation and consensus-making, yet the Government refuses to provide the Canadian people and members of this House with the information that is needed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there any questions or comments?

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has made a very eloquent appeal for more support for social housing. Where was the Hon. Member in all the years when we had Liberal governments—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Orlikow:—when such a small percentage of the funding provided by the federal Government for housing through Canada Mortgage and Housing was allocated for social housing, for senior citizens' housing, for public housing and for co-operative housing?

• (1240)

Would the Hon. Member comment upon the fact that in the most recent documents prepared by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for the Liberal government there were proposals for cutting—I am relying upon my memory but I know that I am not far wrong—the allocation of funds for social and co-operative housing by 50 per cent? Where was the Hon. Member when those things were going on in the Liberal government?

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the Hon. Member asked that question as he and I have known each other for a long time. He knows that I rose in my place many times and urged the then government to put more money into social housing. In fact, there were occasions when I voted against that government and voted with his Party.

Ms. Mitchell: Come over here.

Mr. Allmand: If the Hon. Member would like me to send him my speeches, I would be glad to do so. I was not satisfied with the amounts of money they were putting into social housing, but at least they were moving ahead. They were not moving backwards. It was not enough in my opinion but at least they were moving ahead. This time we are going backwards.

There may have been situations where, because of the rate of inflation and so on, increases in budget did not do as much as we wanted. However, never did my government bring in cutbacks of \$9.6 million or cutbacks in rehabilitation as the present Government has done. The Hon. Member asked where I was. He knows darn well where I was. I used to sit across the way and made many speeches in this area.