

Housing

effort to create the appearance of a single association.

The demands of leadership in Canada are made more difficult because we live in a federal state. Leadership is required both in solving the nation's current problems and in making sure that the constitution and the machinery of federal-provincial relations are in good working order. Unless we pursue both objectives we shall not be able to deal with housing, pollution and so many other matters which affect the daily lives of all Canadians.

Every federal government and every federal prime minister in Canada's history has been called upon to provide that kind of leadership. That is the kind of leadership which this government intends to give the people of Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, despite the good will, even the sympathy, that I feel, I have to say that it is becoming almost impossible to take the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) of this country seriously.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: He rises in this house on an occasion such as this and pretends there is a need on the part of the opposition parties to document the existence of the housing crisis although the occasion of this debate is the resignation of the minister in charge of housing, the deputy prime minister of the country, the man in the best position to know the extent of the crisis and the weakness of the government's proposals to deal with it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: Do members opposite expect us to regard the deputy prime minister of the country as a man of so little intelligence as we are led to believe by virtue of the attitude the Prime Minister adopted here this afternoon? As to the discussion of the constitution, the constitution comes into the matter because of the effect the government's attitude toward it has upon its poor housing performance, and the view of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer) who has resigned.

I find it increasingly difficult to take the Prime Minister seriously. He talks about unitary government. Talk about red herrings! Who has proposed unitary government in this country, Mr. Speaker? The Prime Minister

[Mr. Trudeau.]

sets up a man of straw to knock down. He goes out west on one trip and slaps down the wheat growers, and to prove he is prepared to give equal treatment to all he makes another trip and insults the oil industry. When he thinks the time has come to regain the yards lost out there, he does what any red-blooded leader would do—he attacks the premier of Quebec. After all, it worked pretty well in the election of last June.

● (3:00 p.m.)

Yesterday he lost his seatmate and colleague, the Minister of Transport. That minister attacked the Prime Minister's concept of federalism and its bearing on the ability of the government to meet the many problems of the country. The minister resigned, so the Prime Minister went out into the corridors and attacked the opposition. If the Prime Minister had a wife and if he quarrelled with her he would go out and kick the cat. Ministers have resigned before, although I doubt that a resignation on principle has ever come so soon after a Prime Minister has been elected to power. The Minister of Transport says in effect that the government is not dealing with the bread and butter issues; it lacks initiatives in housing, pollution, inflation and urban development. What is left, Mr. Speaker? Agriculture? External Affairs? Defence policy? The Post Office Department? Are they doing anything right, Mr. Speaker? Are they doing anything at all? In fairness, they are working overtime to establish a study group to advise them as to what they should do about inflation.

The Minister of Transport indicated at his press conference that the Prime Minister has trouble in "comprehending fully the real problems of people in their day-to-day living". What greater charges of unsuitability could be brought against a Prime Minister in a participatory democracy? The report of the task force on housing was presented to this house on January 29. The recommendations were hardly earth-shattering. They did not involve quite as much as we were led to expect, but with the exception of two or three recommendations we endorsed the report of the task force as it held out some hope for material progress.

We said then, as we recommended during the election campaign, that a task force on housing should have had provincial involvement. Leaving this aside, there are recommendations in the report of the task force that the federal government can implement.