

*The Address—Mr. Fleming*

in Vancouver, that was to provide 1,100 homes for veterans and their families on a site specially set aside for the purpose. The federal government stepped in and said that because of the costs and because of the inflationary effect of constructing these houses, only those upon which starts had been made could be completed. They permitted 600 houses to be completed, but 500 were stopped. Can you credit that in this year 1951, under a shabby excuse like that, treatment of this reprehensible type would be meted out by a Canadian government to Canadian veterans?

What I have to say about the prime minister's residence, what I have said on repeated occasions in this house, has always been prefaced by the remark that all parties in this house supported the idea of providing a residence for the prime minister.

**An hon. Member:** Originally.

**Mr. Fleming:** Yes; we have always supported the idea. But, sir, there was no one so far as I know on the opposition side who believed that the government should have carte blanche to go ahead without calling for any tenders, without getting any estimates of the cost of construction, and pour \$600,000 into the construction of one house. They found the money for that purpose, while at the same time they stopped the construction in Vancouver, among other places, of 500 houses because they said they did not have the money, and the construction of those houses would be inflationary. Where is the consistency?

**Mr. Hellyer:** That is not what they said.

**Mr. Fleming:** That is what they said. The Minister of Resources and Development (Mr. Winters) said in this house that these constructions were being stopped and these measures calling for withdrawal of the one-sixth mortgage loan were being adopted, because their effect would be inflationary, and the government was going to stop inflation by discontinuing them. Therefore I say to you: where is the consistency? Apparently it is not inflationary to go ahead with what was a good idea, namely providing a residence for the prime minister, but to make a hopeless botch of the way that project was handled by the government.

**Mr. Laing:** Which project?

**Mr. Fleming:** The prime minister's residence; \$600,000 for one house without any estimates of cost.

**Mr. Whitman:** Cheap.

**Mr. Fleming:** Without any estimates of the cost of construction being brought before the house. They do not like it over there, and I can well understand that they are very

touchy about it, because if there ever was an idea that was good in principle at the start that was wrecked by this government by the way they handled it, by the way they poured taxpayers' money down the drain, it was that project of providing a residence for the prime minister.

**Some hon. Members:** Cheap.

**Mr. Knowles:** They call \$600,000 cheap.

**Mr. Hellyer:** They wanted a residence worthy of you, Donald, if you ever make the grade.

**Mr. Fleming:** I hope I am never lacking in a sense of humour on any question that is properly a subject for humorous discussion in the house; but if we can dismiss from our minds the discontinuance of construction of houses for veterans at Fraserview and elsewhere in Canada, then it might be a matter for humorous comment by my hon. friend opposite. But when it becomes policy on the part of the government to stop the construction of veterans' houses because they say it is inflationary then I say to you, sir, it is not a matter for humour; it is a very tragic matter. It is a tragedy to a good many veterans and their families in Vancouver, and I propose to take that subject seriously.

**Some hon. Members:** Pretty small.

**Mr. Fleming:** What is this situation that the parliamentary assistant (Mr. Sinclair) to the Minister of Finance, speaking for the government, could apparently gloss over? He did not even find it a problem. He said there was only one problem in Canada that anybody has any complaint about, and that is inflation. Of course that is a big problem, but it is not the only problem. May I just give you some indication of how serious this problem is. I think this again will be a challenge to some members of the government, to the parliamentary assistant and others out of touch with public opinion, and out of touch with the hard facts of life in many localities in Canada for too long.

Sir, not long ago a situation arose in the city of Hamilton. It was reported in the press of October 4. I read from the account in the *Globe and Mail* of parents putting their children up for adoption because they did not have accommodation. The account reads:

A story of parents putting their children up for adoption because they did not have housing accommodation to accept the newborn child into their overcrowded living space, was reported here today.

Miss E. Duffy of the Children's Aid Society described this condition to the special housing committee meeting this afternoon, when various welfare agencies disclosed their findings on housing conditions in this city.

**Mr. Laing:** That is Hamilton.