

*National Housing Act*

mentioned. In his opening remarks the minister responsible for housing talked all around the point I want to bring to the attention of the house at this time.

The minister indicated that the real crisis in housing in Canada revolves around difficulties in respect of the low income group in Canada. This conclusion was reached in the special report on housing prepared by Mr. Howard Grafftey, a former member of this house, who followed closely the work of the hon. member for Trinity as he travelled across the country to get first hand knowledge of the critical housing situation.

The point that Mr. Grafftey's report makes is that the real area of crisis which has now spilled over into the middle class income groups is the result of a tragic neglect of the low income groups. Let me speak very briefly about another category of Canadian which has been ignored almost completely in all discussions and thought. I refer to the non-income group of Canadians.

The minister for housing has been a spokesman for this group in the past. As a matter of fact, he re-echoed the voice of the opposition in respect of the government's neglect in many areas of activity related to the problems of the Indians and the Metis in Canada, so much so that he was publicly criticized by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). I would have thought that when the minister stressed the problem of the low income group he would have gone one step further and referred to this really critical area of housing in Canada in relation to this large group of Canadians, those of Indian ancestry.

Many of the Indian and Métis people have no income whatsoever. As a result they endure a standard of housing in many parts of Canada which can only be described as sub-human. When the Prime Minister indicated a few weeks ago that he felt there was no housing crisis, he certainly was not speaking for this non-income group of Canadian citizenry. It is not as though the government has neglected or ignored completely this major social problem. As far back as the latter part of the 1950's, emergency housing programs for Indians, Eskimos and Métis were launched in the northern parts of Canada. Last year, the former Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development upgraded this housing program to bring it into line

with the changing needs resulting from inflation and increasing costs in Canada. The program already exists, and it is operated exclusively by the federal government.

Dealing with Indian housing problems largely in non-urban areas, we can see as we move across Canada that this program is getting underway in an encouraging manner, particularly on Indian reservations across the nation. However, there has been added to the housing problems of this special non-income group a new dimension. The result of the rapid process of urbanization. A recent study has revealed that 10,000 Indian and Métis have moved into the city of Winnipeg in the period from 1960 to 1966. The problem can be readily observed in a concentrated form in the Point Douglas, C.P.R. and Notre Dame areas. These areas now constitute a slum that can only be described as one of the worst in Canada.

We talk about the general problems of pollution, congestion, inadequate recreation, social alienation and inertia which exist in urban communities. This hardly describes the situation one finds in these growing slum districts in the city of Winnipeg as a result of this large scale immigration of Indian and Métis to the urban centres. There is not only social alienation and inertia, there is bug infestation. These slums are disease ridden and the condemned buildings are probably as bad as any you might find anywhere in Canada. This is largely because these people have been forced to move into the lowest level of housing accommodation, buildings that are condemned or should have been condemned, many of them built before the turn of the century.

● (6:20 p.m.)

I speak briefly at this time, because no one has discussed this problem. The minister did not make any specific reference to it in his introductory statement. It seems to me it is the most urgent problem of housing that we face at the moment. Its solution requires the removal of red tape—this has been referred to by many speakers in the debate—because up to 52 transactions have to be proceeded with before you can get housing programs under way. The solution will have to get around the problem of buck-passing between two levels of government, provincial and federal. Extraordinary procedures will have to be adopted, such as have been adopted in