

*National Housing Act*

**Mr. Nicholson:** I think we should not forget that more than 2,250,000 homes, or over 20 per cent of the dwellings within the area of the Federal Republic of Germany were totally destroyed by air bombardment. By the time the fighting ceased another 2.5 million houses were seriously damaged. In some cities like Cologne, 75 per cent of the dwellings were destroyed. The same was true of Essen.

As I said, anyone who has been to Germany will marvel at the ingenuity, the industry and imagination which has been displayed in that country as the people have tried to provide some place for their families and themselves to live. According to this table on page 181 of "Germany Reports", I find that on the basis of completed dwellings per 10,000 population, Australia and Norway come first with 96; the German republic is third with 91; the United States is fourth with 72; Sweden is fifth with 66; Switzerland is sixth with 57; Netherlands is seventh with 53; and Canada is in eighth place.

I agree that Canada's position is still worth while, but in the light of the fact that we have done so little with our cities we should not be proud. We have great resources of material and manpower, and when you consider the increase in our gross national product, the fact that we have only 4,000 low-rental subsidized housing units in all of Canada is something no Canadian can speak of with pride. Therefore I submit, Mr. Speaker, that the policies which were worked out during the war and which were understood to be sound should be accepted in connection with housing. Whatever is physically possible should be made financially possible.

Another book which I am not going to deal with at this time is one which hon. members might read with profit. It is entitled, "My First Seventy-six Years", and was written by Hjalmar Schacht, a former president of the reichsbank in Germany. He is not a socialist. I am not quoting him because he is a socialist, but he was asked to take over a responsible position in Germany when they were in their wildest period of inflation back in the early 1920's, when the hon. member for Qu'Appelle was there. He can tell us about how difficult it was for the people in Germany at that time. Then Hitler also asked Mr. Schacht to take a similar assignment when countries all over the world were in the midst of a depression.

Schacht sold the idea to Hitler that there were two important things to do, namely provide better housing for the people and provide roads across the country. These are two responsibilities of the Minister of Public Works. It was pretty obvious that tackling

the housing problem in Germany was one of the major factors that made it possible for Hitler to get the support which he later used to plunge the world into the second world war. But it was sound economically for Germany in the early 1930's to face up to the slum conditions in that country and embark on an ambitious housing program so that every family in Germany could look out of their windows and see new and better houses being built and better conditions being provided for the citizens of that country.

My time is running out. The late hon. member for York South was our expert on housing. He made a very valuable contribution to the discussion when the act was up for review some years ago. The suggestions he made then are still sound. He offered criticism of the failure of the minister to tackle this problem with a view to providing the best possible housing in all parts of Canada, apart altogether from making an attractive investment return for people who want a high return on money invested.

The problem should be attacked from the point of view of providing better housing for the people. The late Mr. Noseworthy's last suggestion was that the government should not pass the buck to the municipalities. Surely the municipalities and the provinces already have greater burdens than they can meet with their diminishing resources. In a recent analysis showing how we distribute our tax dollar the Canadian Bank of Commerce pointed out that we give only 12 cents out of every tax dollar to the municipalities; we give 14 cents to the provinces and 74 cents to the federal government. The municipalities and the provinces have not the wherewithal to embark on national programs, but the federal government has all the machinery.

If a third world war broke out the federal government would not have any difficulty whatsoever in raising unlimited sums and embarking on very ambitious programs, as was demonstrated during the second world war. It is not good enough for the minister to say that after all this responsibility must be accepted by the provinces. It must be accepted by the federal government. With the taxation and resources the federal government has, with the facilities of the Bank of Canada, with the ability to plan for full employment and to raise standards of living, the federal government must take its full responsibility in this important field.

**Mr. Elmore Philpott (Vancouver South):** Mr. Speaker, we have listened to some remarkable statements from across the way today, but I think the most amazing was the statement of the hon. member for Mackenzie that