

Fifth, that immediate action be taken to raise wages in industries frozen at substandard levels.

Sixth, an extensive public low-rental housing programme which will provide both large-scale employment and urgently needed homes. The present policy of reliance on private enterprise will produce neither jobs nor homes in adequate numbers.

Other public projects which the government should undertake should be the construction of schools, hospitals, roads, rural electrification, irrigation and the like, and the reconversion of government-owned war plants under public ownership to open up new opportunities of employment.

This country requires a really planned programme of reconversion. At present the disposal of Canada's one billion dollar's worth of capital assets is on a completely unplanned basis. The white paper tabled last session was not a plan but merely a statement of objectives and not of methods. Any plan should provide for the welfare of workers affected by cutbacks and the cancellation of war orders and for the public and cooperative operation of valuable plants to meet peace-time needs. Instead of this, ministers simply repeat that there are plenty of jobs, which is cold comfort for those who, for various reasons, cannot find suitable work at wages sufficient to meet the obligations they have undertaken.

But equal to this failure to plan for suitable employment for war workers and returned veterans is the failure to make effective plans for housing. On this point the speech reveals no new plans for the future. On the contrary, it expresses satisfaction with the present plans, stating that the "plans already in operation provide for the expansion of home construction to keep pace with the increases in the output of building material."

The housing need, we are told, is five hundred thousand new homes—new homes now—and then building for a period of years at the rate of fifty thousand more each year. These are minimum figures. Now what has the government done to date? True, we have passed several acts of parliament, but acts of parliament will not provide houses. We expected that limited dividend corporations would be formed under the provisions of the National Housing Act, but so far, as far as I can learn, none have been organized. Wartime Housing, I believe, is building ten thousand inadequate houses, and the veterans' land administration only three thousand houses. Besides this, there has been a policy of going cap in hand to the insurance companies offering them a government-guaranteed return and permitting a de-

[Mr. Coldwell.]

lay of more than a year since the passing of the National Housing Act in setting up a single limited dividend corporation. The result is that no home will be completed by a limited dividend corporation for weeks, and when the homes are completed they will not have been built in accordance with community needs but on the basis of private profit.

There is no reason to believe that the insurance companies will build low-rental houses, and those are the houses we need—housing available to the masses of the people who need it. Under the National Housing Act, insurance companies can obtain government loans to build houses costing \$5,000, and these will be available only to those who can pay a rental of, say, \$50 a month, or the upper fifteen per cent in the income tax brackets. These houses being built under the National Housing Act, as distinct from the limited dividend corporation, are not within the reach of most people who need them. Today a modern five-roomed house will cost about \$6,000, and that is low. I understand that the loan may be \$5,400, but this means that the buyer must find and pay down as a cash payment \$1,100 and assume a mortgage of \$4,300.

Including taxes this would involve a monthly payment of at least \$35. We are told authoritatively that shelter should not exceed one-fifth of the income after taxes, so that such a contract should not be undertaken by any person whose income is less than \$2,100 a year after taxes. Not one out of five of those who pay income taxes can afford this type of housing accommodation on that basis. The government has apparently set its face against public housing enterprises, refusing to allow municipalities to come under the act, as we urged last year, thus refusing to profit by the experience both of Great Britain and of New Zealand.

I am told that out of hundreds of veterans who have considered building under the National Housing Act only seventy have attempted it. The rest found that they could not meet the down payments and the monthly obligations; yet the nation cries aloud for decent homes, and veterans are returning to find their families and themselves without shelter.

In view of this situation I am going to move an amendment, seconded by the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. MacInnis):

That all the words of the amendment after the word "that" be struck out and the following substituted therefor:

We respectfully submit, however, that in the opinion of this house Your Excellency's advisers have failed to propose the fundamental social and economic changes which alone can meet the pressing needs of the peace-time era upon which

we have entered, and we urge that immediate steps be taken to assure full employment, adequate purchasing power, and a large-scale building programme that will provide urgently needed homes for the Canadian people.

The intimation that the various acts and orders in council relating to veterans' problems are to be consolidated into a veterans' charter is, I think, to be welcomed generally in this house. We should as soon as possible see, too, that all social security measures are consolidated into a similar comprehensive national charter. I wish to say now that the out-of-work benefits to unemployed war workers must be extended to veterans. The present provisions for returning men and women are inadequate. This is particularly apparent in the case of veterans who have decided to go on with their educational courses; \$60 a month for a single person and \$80 a month for a married man. That is not enough. A married man will have to pay rent for himself and family, if he has a child or children, of at least \$30 a month for unfurnished accommodation.

Mr. MACKENZIE: There are allowances for the children, too; my hon. friend knows that.

Mr. COLDWELL: Yes, but I am taking the amount of rent likely to be paid by a childless couple. I know that accommodation for a man and his wife will amount to at least \$30 a month; that is, nearly one-third of his income must go for rent. His gratuity will under present prices—and remember they are still war-time prices—be absorbed in buying furniture, pots and pans and other household equipment. You have only to price the pots and pans in the hardware stores to-day to see that they are at inflated prices. At prevailing prices the married veterans, like the unplaced war worker, requires a minimum of at least \$25 a week.

It is all very well for the government to refer to the general generosity of its proposals, but let me remind them of their promises: "Jobs at decent wages and adequate standards of living." We are merely asking that these promises be fulfilled.

When mentioning some veterans' problems I should like to make a plea for the men who have suffered as prisoners of war under the Japanese. Provision was to be made, the house will remember, to make an additional allowance to service personnel who volunteered for the Pacific war. If my memory serves me correctly, that was to date from sometime in June or the first of July of this year. If this is the case, the Hong Kong veterans would be ineligible. I am asking the government, if this is the case, to reconsider the matter.

To my mind they deserve all that we can do for them, and the least we can do is to make them eligible for all special payments provided for service in the Pacific from the day they embarked on their ill-fated expedition. The dependents of any who perished should be entitled to the payments the soldier would have received had he survived. This seems to me to be simple justice.

If we are to maintain decent standards of living and enable the people to build homes and buy the goods which our factories and mines can produce, they must have purchasing power. The government made the specific promise that taxes would be reduced. That should be honoured this session by raising the tax exemptions on single persons' incomes to not less than \$1,200 and on incomes of married men and persons with dependents to not less than \$2,000. These are the people who must spend practically all their incomes on consumable goods and hence buy things the making of which keeps industry and agriculture running. In other words, these are the people who will buy more food, more clothes, more shelter as they have more money to spend.

At the moment and for some time to come there will be a ready market for everything the farmer can produce. Though the war has brought welcome and temporary alleviation to the farmer's position in some respect, notably through higher prices and an increased demand for his products, basically there has been no permanent change in agriculture's relation to the rest of the Canadian economy. But the future prosperity of Canada requires the fullest development of Canadian agriculture. During the war the shortage of farm help increased the trend toward power farming, and now that machinery will become more readily available this trend will, I believe, continue and perhaps become still more accelerated.

This means that provided the farmer is guaranteed a fair share of the national income and decent conditions of life, he can produce not only all that we require to improve our own nutritional standards in this country, but to produce the vast quantities of food for a starving world. We were told at San Francisco that before the war two-thirds of the world's population were permanently underfed. Under the charter of the united nations, which we believe will be approved this session, we have obligated ourselves with other nations to maintain full employment and to raise the living standards all over the world. If we are to contribute our share, we must guarantee prices for farm products that will enable the farmer to enjoy conditions of life as good as those which are enjoyed by those