

That is a sample of the campaign promises of the Liberal party in 1945. What has happened since has been a deliberate repudiation of the responsibility that was inherent in those promises; yes, and a falsification of those promises in the light of their non-fulfilment by this government since.

I wish the government would tell us just how bad the situation is. Why is the situation as bad as it still is? Well, one reason is that the government has failed to use the powers it had. Hon. members will recall that historic day, the first day of April, 1946, when the Minister of Reconstruction and Supply came into the house and announced the end of any attempt to control the channeling of building materials into particular building projects, thereby throwing away the opportunity the government itself had to channel available supplies of building materials into the erection of houses, and giving rise, in inevitable consequence, to the use of those precious building materials in the erection of theatres and many other kinds of projects that could well have awaited fulfilment of the government's plan to house veterans and others.

Not only did that foolish mistake result in the absorption of building materials in forms of construction other than the building of houses, but it absorbed much needed building labour. There has been a great dearth of building labour. That is one reason. If the government had really taken seriously its own promises of 1945, and measured up in any degree at all to its responsibilities as a government in the years which followed that election, then it certainly would have seen that building materials available and building labour available were at the disposal of those engaged in the building of houses.

Today we heard an interesting comparison of figures from the minister's parliamentary assistant. He was most anxious to compare figures in Canada with figures in the United Kingdom. Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you and to every fair-minded member in the house that that is not a fair basis of comparison. A fair basis of comparison, and a proper way in which to judge the failure of the government with respect to housing, is to compare what this government has done with what this government might have done if it had used the means at its disposal, and if it had had the necessary will and determination to grapple with this problem.

It will be remembered that on July 22, 1946, the minister made an interesting statement about the housing deficit. He pointed out at page 3672 of *Hansard* how serious the housing shortage was. He said there was an immediate

emergency shortage of 150,000 houses, and even assuming that the government's objective of 60,000 houses in that year were attained, by the spring of 1947 the shortage would have become twenty per cent worse.

When are we to have any similar report from the minister as to conditions since that time? It is high time we had such a report. I asked the minister in the house on July 15 of last year to give the house an estimate of the emergency housing deficit; not the number of houses required for good, standard housing accommodation, but the actual immediate emergency housing shortage for people who did not have proper roofs over their heads. The minister did not choose to give the house any such information. I asked for it, but it was not forthcoming.

I ask the minister now to give the house the best information available as to the actual emergency shortage of housing in Canada. I know, for instance, that in my own city conditions are as bad as ever they were. In today's press I find that the welfare commissioner, reporting to the civic welfare committee at the city hall in Toronto yesterday, stated that the Toronto housing situation is just as bad as ever, and that between 6,000 and 7,000 families are living in accommodation that is unsatisfactory. Yes, we shall be glad to hear from the minister some adequate report on this present shortage of houses.

I spoke about one excuse the minister has been conjuring up. I turn to the other; and it is really an extension of the first one. It is this. The minister is very anxious for any opportunity to blame the provincial governments and the municipalities. Hon. members will recall the readiness with which he was prepared to scrap that portion of the 12,000 houses plan which was announced in Vancouver last fall, when he saw an opportunity of picking a quarrel with the Premier of Ontario over a bill that was before the Ontario legislature at the recent session, known as the crown tenants and provincial-municipal services bill.

Mr. HOWE: Dominion crown tenants.

Mr. FLEMING: The municipalities have done more than this government has chosen to give them credit for. The fact of the matter is that far too much of the burden of this problem has been cast upon the municipalities, a portion far beyond their legal powers to meet, far beyond their financial resources to cope with.

And while this government is making its position plain in opposition to assistance, either in the form of a rent reduction fund or capital contributions, it is worthy of recollection that