

Supply—Labour

income and for the aged have almost been a failure.

● (5:00 p.m.)

In Toronto, the Social Planning Metropolitan Council has made it known that we had missed by 56 per cent the goal set for a five-year period ending in 1963. Only 2,500 new housing units for the aged have been built in the Toronto metropolitan area. Still fewer low rental family units have been built. An objective of 5,000 units had been set, but only 352 were built, that is 7 per cent of the objective.

In Montreal, the situation is even worse. Thousands of houses are shared by two families and many other families with four or five children or even more live in two rooms.

The director of the Montreal board of social services, Mr. Pierre Laplante, has accurately described the conditions at the end of May 1966 at a meeting attended by civil and religious authorities. The newspaper *Le Devoir* of June 1 also referred to them.

I am now quoting *Le Devoir* of June 1966:

Mr. Laplante complained that hundreds of houses have been demolished in blighted areas with the help a wide publicity campaign, but that nothing had been built afterwards... neither the new C.B.C. building nor low rental housing units. He explained that the families thus expelled from their decrepit homes had to seek refuge in other homes just as decrepit. "In the last few years, he stated, a great many homes have been demolished, it is true, but for the purpose of building skyscrapers and apartment buildings for millionaires. Now, the lots cleared of their unsanitary dwellings are becoming residential districts for rich people and, as a result, the poor must find shelter elsewhere."

Mr. Laplante added that downtown Montreal is the most densely populated area in North America (11,000 inhabitants per square mile) or 88,000 families whose average annual income barely exceeds \$3,000.

Mr. Chairman, could the head of a family then seriously consider owning a home when he barely earns \$3,000 and he would have to meet monthly instalments of \$140 or \$150, without including the cost of maintenance? It is unthinkable.

And now, back to the article:

Almost 70 per cent of those families live in extremely difficult circumstances, if not in the most abject poverty. "The children, he said, wear hand-me-downs from their grandfathers and green expanses are practically non-existent. Just open the front door and you are on the pavement."

And Mr. Laplante added: "In this narrow strip of land, lives a strata of the population that never sees the sun."

Well then, Mr. Speaker, the situation which prevailed in Montreal in 1966 is very much the same to-day and perhaps even worse

[Mr. Laprise.]

since I believe that because of Expo, house-building may have slackened.

Mr. Chairman, in the face of such a situation and in view of the need for new houses, I feel that instead of increasing interest rates, the minister should give some thought to cutting it down so as to allow more Canadian families to have decent houses built, in order to give them a sense of ownership rather than the feeling they are just tenants at the service of financial interests.

The fourth annual report of the Economic Council of Canada states very clearly our housing requirements until 1970; according to that report, there should be at least 200,000 housing starts every year up to 1970. Again, Mr. Chairman, that will not keep up with the increased requirements, because with 200,000 units a year we will not even make up for lost time, since we are already quite late in the field of housing construction.

Those are the few comments I wanted to offer the minister, since we are discussing the housing problem in Canada.

Mr. Chairman, it is not by increasing the cost of housing that we will solve this problem, but rather by reducing it. Let us make the borrowing facilities available to the builders, available to the public. We may offer as many facilities as we want, but if housing costs continue to rise, as is now the case, if rental costs keep going up, as is now the case, families, heads of families will never become home-owners, and I think that the workers have the right to home ownership, in order to feel at home in a house, with a front and a back yard, and a lawn to rest after their working day, a place where they could grow a few things, do a little gardening and plant some flowers, because they will be happy to own a piece of their homeland. It is only then that we shall have real patriots willing to defend their homeland because they will own a part of it.

Mr. Chairman, everybody has a right to live in his own home, in a single house which will be his only, and the duty of the government is to take the necessary steps to help him to reach this aim.

Now, I think that if the minister and his government will try a little and look for solutions, they have only to address themselves to the governor of the Bank of Canada and give him the necessary orders to create credit as quickly as the houses we shall be able to build. When this is done, we can rest assured that it will not take very long before everybody gets his own house in Canada.