

*Housing*

field of housing, the country was to have adequate housing at reasonable prices that people with moderate incomes could afford to buy. The Deputy Prime Minister has told us that, in his opinion, his program which was worked out with great care after his trip across the country, at quite some expense to the taxpayers of Canada, examining housing questions in all parts of Canada, has very little chance of ever coming before the house for decision. These are the words of the man in charge of this program, not the words of the opposition. They are the words of the Deputy Prime Minister who is in charge of this housing program.

When the Prime Minister spoke this afternoon, he glibly quoted figures regarding the housing situation today, mentioning only numbers of houses being built. It seems to be of no concern to this Prime Minister what people have to pay for the houses they buy or rent. It is of no importance to him if you have to pay several thousand dollars more this year than last year, and several thousand dollars more the year after. This is of no consequence to the Prime Minister. He is in the very fortunate position of not having to worry about these things and he seems to believe that other people find themselves in that same fortunate position. Your Honour and I both know, as well as other hon. members of this house, that there are very few people in this country who find themselves in that position.

A few weeks ago in Montreal the Prime Minister made an attempt to visit a housing development in order to find out what the people who live in that kind of housing think about the government's program. He received a rather inhospitable welcome. What did he do? Did he stand there, face it out and discuss the question with these people? No. He turned tail and ran. The Prime Minister cannot take criticism. He does not want to hear people saying unkind things to him. This is why he turned on his heels, left and never went back. That is the last contact he has had with people in this country who cannot afford the housing they need. Yet, he glibly says today everything is all right in this country under a Liberal government, there is all the housing that people need. The Prime Minister implied that, like himself, everyone has all the money they need to buy whatever house is offered to them at whatever price the landlord chooses to charge. We can see what has happened to that glib promise.

[Mr. Hees.]

The people of this country were promised there would be some action on the problem of pollution. The people of this country were told they deserve and would get clean air and clean water. Yesterday, at his press conference, the man who knows more about what is or what is not going on in the government stated flatly that the government had no program; that nothing had been started to deal with these matters and that there appeared to him no likelihood that anything would be started to deal with these problems. So much for the Prime Minister's glib promise to the people in the shopping plazas that under this new Liberal government they would now get clean air and clear water.

The Prime Minister promised a new and better life for those who live in the urban communities of this country. Yesterday, the Deputy Prime Minister said once again there is no government program to improve urban life. He stated there is nothing even in the planning stage. Those are his words, not mine. They appeared in the newspapers. Newspapermen attending that conference know exactly what he said. I think the minister is a man of conscience and great sincerity. I have known him in this house for 20 years and, although I have fought with him over many issues, I have always respected him. I may not have agreed with him, but I knew that when he spoke he told the truth as he saw it. He said this government is doing nothing to halt the inflation taking place in this country. Since the Prime Minister took office inflation has increased month by month. When you ask the Minister of Finance what he proposes to do to curb inflation, he answers that everything possible is being done; that we should trust him and wait to see what will happen next month or the month after. Yet, inflation increases all the time.

● (4:30 p.m.)

Yesterday morning the Deputy Prime Minister said that the Prime Minister would sooner debate constitutional issues than tackle the practical problems facing the people of the country. He said that the Prime Minister, who is his seat mate in the house, his senior in the cabinet and his closest confidante would sooner discuss constitutional matters in a scholarly way than come to grips with practical problems facing the people of this country.

At his press conference yesterday morning the Deputy Prime Minister made clear in no