

The Address—Mr. A. Stewart

I scanned with interest the speech from the throne to find any indication that we were to strengthen the Criminal Code against actions which threaten the security of the state, on the part of these communist enemies of Canada who are working within our midst.

I found no such indication, however, and when he returns to his place in the house from the important duties he is discharging elsewhere I hope that the Secretary of State for External Affairs will have something to say in support of legislation to strengthen the Criminal Code, the necessity of which he admitted in the speech he made in Montreal on July 19.

Sir, failing that there will be, I trust, further opportunity at this session to raise that question. Because, believe me, resolute action within this country—by democratic methods, yes—must accompany our efforts in the external field to combat the ravages of aggression by communist totalitarianism.

I do not need to repeat what has been said in the house about the responsibility of the opposition. The vast government majority puts a heavy responsibility upon those of us who sit in this part of the house. We will not be daunted by the fact that government supporters not only fill the side of the house to your right, Mr. Speaker, but overflow to this side in numbers greater even than the official opposition.

Those of us who sit here have Liberals in front of us, Liberals to the right of us and Liberals in a hurry to the left of us. We are surrounded by Liberals, and Liberals in a hurry. But, sir, we have no intention of being daunted; we have no intention of being turned aside from performing that duty which the Canadian people expect of us. Whether they are numbered among the 1,742,000 electors who honoured us with their support, or whether they voted for other candidates, nevertheless they appreciate and will insist upon the importance of the duty laid upon His Majesty's loyal opposition under our parliamentary system.

Mr. Alistair Stewart (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Eglinton (Mr. Fleming) has commented upon the tranquil atmosphere which has descended upon the House of Commons. For a moment or two I thought he was going to break that atmosphere of tranquillity. Now there are certain dangers in an atmosphere such as that, because a legislative body can become embalmed in tranquillity. In some ways this government has already reached that stage.

Today I am going to speak on certain matters of policy about which the government can feel no tranquillity at all. First of all I should like to refer to the statement made

respecting housing by the Minister of Reconstruction and Supply (Mr. Winters). I shall comment upon this at some length. I think we know from his statement just what the government's policy is, and what its intentions are. My only hope is that the policy will show improvement by the time the legislation is brought before us.

I listened carefully to his statement. In common with many others I have read it even more carefully. As I read it and thought it over it became obvious to me that although the mountain had groaned in the pangs of birth something considerably less than a mouse had been born.

For some weeks the minister travelled across the country from city to city. On the one hand he may have been a peripatetic record of "his master's voice." On the other hand he may have been trying to find out some of the facts of life about housing in this country. But what he displayed to us yesterday in the way of policy certainly was not very encouraging. In almost every city he went to he delivered an address which dealt with the fact that he was proud of the record of his government. I am not surprised at that pride, because I have found so many Liberals who worship the very ground their heads are buried in.

Even during the election campaign we were told how proud the government was of the fact that 81,000 new housing units had been constructed in this country. They kept careful silence about the other fact that there were 90,000 new families in Canada, families created either by the marriage of Canadians, or through immigration to this country. And there was even greater silence over the fact that the average cost of those homes in this country must have been in the neighbourhood of \$7,000—and I think that is a rather conservative estimate. In my constituency the average wage is between \$37 and \$38 a week. I fail to see how a man earning that sum, with prices as they are, and with the cost of living as it is today, could possibly hope to buy a house—even with the reduced down payment—costing at least \$7,000. And until the government tackles that problem it is merely toying with the housing situation as it exists in Canada today.

In the minister's statement I detected certain changes of mind—at least I hope they were such. For instance, I recall one of the lengthy debates we had in this chamber in 1946 on the subject of housing. At page 3686 of *Hansard* for July 22, 1946, the then minister of reconstruction and supply said this, concerning housing:

This government, as a matter of policy, is not prepared to introduce subsidies either in the form of a grant towards capital cost or subsequent contributions to a rent reduction fund.