

The Address—Mr. Ross (Souris)

financial assistance. These men cannot obtain priorities for the purchase of tractors and farm machinery, despite the fact that they are ready to pay for these things themselves. I realize that equipment is scarce, but I think the board could give further consideration to the men in this category. They are deserving of more assistance.

Veterans housing constitutes a pretty thorny problem all across Canada. I am referring particularly to the small holdings. There is one project in Manitoba known as the Charleswood, and I have had occasion to visit this many times during 1946. I have some personal friends living in houses on this project. The construction of some ninety homes was commenced, I think in 1945, and a good deal of dissatisfaction has been expressed by a number of these settlers since they have occupied their houses. I brought this matter before the committee on veterans affairs which sat last session when I returned from a trip out west during the month of June.

Mr. MACKENZIE: Are those Veterans Land Act houses?

Mr. ROSS (Souris): Yes, small holdings. When I was out there later in the season I had a contractor who is a personal friend of mine in Winnipeg accompany me. He made a thorough survey of one of these homes which the government had built and for which they are asking \$7,300. After measuring the housing unit and listing everything which went into its construction, he assured me that with better material and better workmanship—I must confess that it is not very good workmanship or good materials that are used in most of these housing units—he could have built a like unit in 1939 for \$3,145. The difference between \$3,145 and \$7,300 is \$4,155, or approximately 130 per cent inflation since 1939.

These units were built on a cost-plus basis under government supervision. I have inspected these units and discussed the situation with their inhabitants and I think they offer a fair value of socialism. They were built for the government under government supervision on a cost-plus basis, and I am sure that is the way in which any socialist government would operate.

Mr. KNOWLES: Since when did you start writing the doctrines of socialism?

Mr. ROSS (Souris): I am not writing it, but I have studied the doctrine of several of these European countries for the past few years.

Mr. JACKMAN: He who hath eyes to see.

[Mr. J. A. Ross.]

Mr. ROSS (Souris): Remember, according to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Ilsley) who was Minister of Finance during the war years, in a statement which he made on February 28 last, lumber produced in Canada selling at a ceiling of \$26 per 1,000 feet in Canada is exported at the prevailing price of \$70 per 1,000 feet. We had an interesting set of figures on the construction of these houses at this time. I understand that an order in council was passed in May, 1946, making provision for \$1,000,000 to be used by the Department of Veterans Affairs, for the adjustment of the cost of these houses, or whatever adjustments may be necessary, but that as of February 27 last nothing of a satisfactory nature has been accomplished in respect of a settlement with many of the occupants of the houses in the Charleswood area, and that information is up to within the last few days.

Mr. KNOWLES: The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) also visited there during the election campaign.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): Did he?

Mr. KNOWLES: Yes.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): I will confess that I was there myself during the election campaign and was there for many months before any candidate was nominated or anything said about an election, and I have been there several times since. I have gone right through the whole trend of events.

Mr. KNOWLES: The Minister of Agriculture promised to come back to Ottawa and have something done about the matter.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): Did he?

Mr. JACKMAN: Where were you?

Mr. KNOWLES: In Winnipeg.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): According to the Canadian building authorities claim—and it has never been repudiated by anybody—no person can afford to purchase or agree to purchase a house valued at over twice his or her annual income. I think that is generally recognized across the country. The average veteran in Canada today does not receive an annual income of over \$1,500. I believe that can be admitted. Therefore one of these five-room housing units at \$7,300 is altogether too costly to be charged to the average veteran during these times. I believe it is recognized that things are pretty much at a peak now. If we are to have a recession and this is the peak of the average income of the veterans they will have great difficulty in fulfilling their obligation.