

the dwelling-places of these little children, whose protection and care should be regarded as a sacred trust, imposed upon us by the Master, to whom helpless little children appealed so strongly. An eminent Englishman once said that there had been many illustrations of the well known text, "Suffer little children to come unto Me," and the children in the picture were always depicted as round-faced, rosy-cheeked, happy-looking children. Said he: "I would like to see the same subject illustrated by a picture in which the children would be depicted as thin, with worn features and haggard eyes and tear-stained face. It was to these that Our Lord would give His tenderest welcome."

Even an unskilled workman must have a living wage, adjusted, not to the needs of a single man in a boarding-house or a shack, but to the needs of family life in a real home. He should not be forced by necessity to pay a high rent and yet live in a tenement which lacks the basic elements of decent, civilized life. If he receives a fair wage and yet cannot be given a chance to occupy a decent home, the State should intervene on his behalf. This, the unskilled laboring class, is the one which suffers the most, but there are some of the skilled mechanics and other classes who also suffer greatly from being forced to pay excessive rents. There are today clerks in offices, and other married salaried officials who are bearing an increasing burden each year, because of rental conditions. They are silent sufferers, and the public knows nothing of their tragic struggle. The inadequate supply of small houses of suitable types, available at moderate rental, is the most serious social want in our province today.

A modern government has positive functions to discharge, in bettering the conditions of its people. It cannot abolish poverty, but it can improve some of the laws which bear heavily and unjustly upon certain classes in each community. It is the business of the State to provide efficiently for the welfare of man in these things, which he cannot reasonably provide for himself. Public authority has the right to supervise the operations of a special class of landlords, whose great aim in life is to secure the largest possible rental on their invested capital without any regard to the interests of their tenants. I am not attacking landlords as a class. I know the guilt rests only upon individuals. Legislation can be enacted which will prevent these individuals from sacrificing the common welfare to their private advantage. Altho the legislature must not ignore the rights of the private owner, yet it should protect the natural rights of all. It may appoint a permanent tribunal, empowered to keep rents below extortionate levels.