

a great many small municipalities that at the present time are stagnating or are not progressing.

In 1910 there were about 1,500 people in my riding. Parry Sound, the largest town in the riding, has a population of 6,000. Mr. Speaker, I am talking about a beautiful riding which now has a population of approximately 61,000. Some of the illustrious members who spoke earlier today were speaking of ridings with populations of hundreds of thousands. They were wondering where to put the people. Mr. Speaker, they do not have to look too far north. I know a great many areas are decentralizing, but Toronto goes to Mississauga or West Hill—perhaps the pioneers go as far as Oshawa or Bowmanville. It is time they started looking farther north. I may be accused of being parochial, but the same thing applies to the rural areas around metropolitan Montreal, Winnipeg, Calgary, Vancouver and the Maritimes. It is time this House realized that we can do something other than encouraging the building of great, mushrooming, concrete jungles.

It is a well-known fact that it is the dream of every Canadian to own a piece of this country during his lifetime. Some will want it in their early years, while others wish to own a cottage for their retirement. It is up to us in government to meet these needs of Canadians as soon as possible. The problem in many small towns, is not land, but funds for financing housing projects. Interest rates should be comparable to those in the more buoyant economic areas of our country.

• (1550)

Another attraction would be the fact that the lots would be much bigger, enabling people to have gardens of their own. Houses would be spaced much farther apart, giving families more privacy. If funds are made available for individuals to build their own homes, with only small down payments being necessary, many more jobs would be available in those communities. That, too, would keep the populations at home in those communities. For example, Mr. Speaker, I was talking to a small contractor who endeavoured to bid on some low-rental housing which was to be erected in his town. The contract went to a contractor of this great city in which we sit, which is 300 miles away from that town. I suppose the local man was not able to provide a bond, or something like that. Perhaps the two contractors should have got together and done the job. At any rate, the large contractor built the homes, and they were not satisfactory.

An hon. member speaking previously in the debate criticized the high price of some of these homes and their poor workmanship. That was the case in the example I have given. On top of that, after this high-minded contractor left, he owed a great deal of money to subcontractors and they had a terrible job collecting it. Perhaps some are still trying to collect. I feel that when such contracts are let in the smaller areas, top priority should be given to local contractors. Local help would be hired and raw materials could be purchased locally.

Your have already heard, Mr. Speaker, members representing urban areas pointing out that housing is in big demand in those centres because of the tremendous growth in population. We concede that we are moving into a period when the great majority of our population will be

living, or existing, in these great mountains of concrete and steel. Surely it is just plain, good business and common sense to try to save our small communities from becoming extinct by providing capital and incentives to maintain them and, if possible, to help them grow.

The Department of Regional Economic Expansion, therefore, should give serious consideration to locating industries in these have-not areas and providing even higher grants and other incentives in order that good industries may locate in them. I believe it is a proven fact that employers who have established plants in recent years in small communities have enjoyed much better relationships with their employees and there has been less turnover, fewer strikes and, I am sure, better productivity. I am wondering, Mr. Speaker, if housing units could be built to less rigid standards in small communities in order to reduce building costs. Houses there would not need to be as large. I know in many subdivisions a house must have a minimum number of square feet, which puts it beyond the price range of many citizens.

There is one other type of housing which I feel should be emphasized very strongly, that is, the senior citizens' housing unit. These should be erected and available in every small town across this country, even where there is no sewage system. A great many of our senior citizens in their declining years are living at present in great big homes which are costly to maintain and on which taxes are too high. If small, modern apartments were available, many of them would be only too pleased to dispose of their larger homes and move into those units. This would provide homes at reasonable cost to many young families who might not be in the position to afford a new house. I can speak with some knowledge on this matter, as in my own village we have senior citizens' units which are serving that much needed purpose. Our municipality has been fortunate enough to have another 24 units approved. They are to be built later this year.

The provincial and federal governments are to be commended for co-operating in providing low-rental housing accommodation, but these units must also be made available to a great many smaller towns and villages which at present are not able to qualify. Again, I feel that these could be built in areas where there would be no possibility of pollution, in towns that cannot afford sewage systems or even water systems.

I spoke earlier about the cost of installing a sewage system in our town. A great many municipalities would not even gamble to that extent, and they are lying dormant. My previous remarks apply also to senior citizens' homes. If they were made available, other homes would be released for the market. Certainly it would be more economical if governments were to combine their activities and build, say, five or six units at a time for senior citizens. Doing this would be cheaper than sending senior citizens to senior citizens' homes where they must be looked after at a much higher cost. I have just resigned from the board of management of a senior citizens' home in my riding on which I served for seven or eight years. Although we ran, I think, a very economical operation, I believe it cost us between \$10 and \$11 per day, per resident. Building the units I have talked about would be more economical. Further, such action would be a money-