



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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OUR HOUSING PROBLEM

An address by the Minister of Resources and Development, Mr. R.H. Winters at the annual dinner of the Canadian Institute of Plumbing and Heating, at the Seignory Club, Montebello, P.Q., October 22, 1952.

...I need hardly tell an audience such as this that we as Canadians are in a rapidly expanding economy. Not only are industry and other activity developing apace in our cities, but perhaps even more spectacular is the engineering and industrial development in the outlying areas. Throughout the nation there are more people employed than ever before; our gross national product is higher; there is virtually no unemployment, and the whole economy is buoyant. As might be expected under these circumstances, the number of our families has increased greatly. Although what I am about to say has been stated on more than one occasion, I think it bears repeating that whereas we entered the War with some 2½ million families, we now have something like 3½ million families. While our population increased by 25 per cent, the number of families increased by about 38 per cent during the ten years ending June 1951. This increase is good for Canada. It shows a great faith in the future by the people of this country - but it also poses problems, among them being the supply of new housing.

Housing Accomplishment

The first question which might be asked is, how have we done in meeting this problem? I think the answer to that is, quite well. Since the end of the War, about seven years ago, we have as a nation built 570,000 new housing-units. This is the result of the combined efforts of all of those who have directed their attention to this problem. When viewed in the light of all circumstances, I think that a good job has been done. However, the very substantial increment in the number of houses - and it is an increase of about 20 per cent since 1945 - has not been more than enough to keep up with our needs; but it certainly has been enough to put strains upon some of the resources necessary to effect a high level of new housing.

You will recall that in the early post-war years, building materials and, in some places, labour were in very short supply. Thanks to a magnificent job by producers of building materials I think it's a fair statement now that, save for cement, the availability of building materials is not a currently serious problem.

The question might be asked here, how are we doing now? Again, I should say, quite well, bearing in mind some of the circumstances under which we are operating.