

*National Housing Act*

struction of some of these large bank and theatre buildings, where I believe they pay more for their material and their labour. As a civic official I had some experience with carpenters, bricklayers, lathers and plasterers, and I have been told they get better pay when working on banks, apartment houses, theatres and buildings of that kind than when working on small houses; and in addition their work is steadier. That may or may not be true; I do not know.

Then I think some assistance should have been given to make more use of Toronto island. I know what has been done at Belle Isle and along Lake St. Clair boulevard to help solve the housing problem in Detroit. The climate of Toronto island is good; sometimes in the winter it is as warm as it is in the city. If the government had carried out the proposal to build two bridges or a tunnel, that island could be used all year. As it is it does a great deal to lessen the housing problem during six or seven months in the spring and summer.

I believe one of the main reasons for our housing problem—I know because it has affected me—is found in the abuses of our housing control system. I had to part with some property I once owned. I did not need to sell it, but I disposed of it because I could not be bothered with the control system. You got a tenant in who signed a lease for no boarders; he turned the house upside down, let it go to rack and ruin, put in things not allowed in a residential district, profiteered and violated his lease; yet under the control system you could not do anything about him. So I parted with that property at a considerable sacrifice. If we could have some modification of that absurd control system I believe it would help the housing problem, as no one now wants to own real estate with such abuses. Under controls real estate has been permanently injured. It is an impossible system because it prevents private enterprise from building the smaller homes. Under our controls returned soldiers cannot get into houses they have bought with their credits and gratuities. So I believe that as soon as possible we should eliminate the control system as it applies to small houses. As the hon. member for Brandon said the other day fifty per cent is the law in New Zealand; it should be sixty per cent in Canada. For this year there should be a suspension of the building of skyscrapers for theatres and buildings of that kind; and the labour and materials used for that type of building should be diverted to housing projects up to sixty per cent. It is true that the materials used

[Mr. Church.]

may not be the same in all respects as for banks and theatres, but those costly buildings do lead to higher labour costs and higher costs of materials in connection with the building of small houses.

I believe the doctrine of paying bonuses, subventions and subsidies is a good one; if it is applied properly it would solve all economic needs of all the provinces. As I said earlier, I did not intend taking part in this debate, nor have I done so to any considerable length. But I can tell you this, that we in the city of Toronto have been a very happy people. Those who visited our city the other day would find there a kind-hearted people, a people who have a keen interest for their country in their hearts. Our city was built by people of that description—people of all classes from all parts of the world.

The city council has been committed to a certain program in connection with Regent street, and many other matters, and I hope the federal power will carry it out. I understand from the minister's bill that if any individual applies to the new corporation under Bill No. 280 he may obtain a loan up to ninety per cent. That fact has not been very well advertised either in the newspapers or over the radio. I suggest that there should be more extensive advertising of that fact. If it were known many people would apply immediately. We have something over four months before the early part of the winter—because we realize that immediately after the Canadian National exhibition, early in September, the fires have to be lighted again in our houses. I do not know where many people will be next winter, in view of the great number of applications for possession and ejection which have been and are now being made before the county court judges. Not a day should be lost in building with labour and materials made available. The only way to solve the difficulty would be to have a sufficient number of small houses built immediately. I do not believe in the building of too many larger apartment houses. I would urge that so far as possible the government should get on with the work and have a large number of small houses built in the next four months—and there are only four months in which to do this.

I believe Toronto has done more than any other city in Canada along the lines I have stated in providing splendid municipal service. It has gone a long way in connection with the ownership of public utilities. It owns its street transportation system, and hon. members will be familiar with the Toronto transportation commission. Then, it has been most active in the development of good roads, and has