

Transitional Measures Act

that was the accepted policy of the federal government. The answer in each and every instance was that there had been no agreement, that there had been no consultation, and that it could not be accepted as the present policy of the government to enter into that kind of agreement.

So that the situation in which we find ourselves today is that while there is a particularly acute shortage of general housing, that need is greatest of all in the field of rental housing. In 1941 we find that 58.9 per cent of all the houses occupied in Canada were rented. That is what we find from the census of that year. In the larger urban centres, with populations of 5,000 or more, the percentage of rented houses was then 65.8 per cent. At that time it would have required well over 100,000 houses to prevent overcrowding in those larger centres.

In other words there were about 1,250,000 rented houses in Canada at the time of that census, or between 4 million and 5 million Canadians in that year of 1941 who were living in rented accommodation. So that this question of rentals, the increase permitted last fall, and the whole matter of rental controls can be said, under present conditions, to affect about 5 million Canadians, or more. On the question of rentals the booklet called "Mortgage Lending in Canada", published in 1948 under the authority of the national housing administration, had this to say concerning the operations of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation:

The operations of the corporation indicate clearly that the housing need is much greater in the rental field than it is in the home ownership field. The supply of new rental housing, even including that built by the government, is only about 30 per cent of all residential construction. It is evident that many purchasers of new houses would have preferred to rent rather than purchase.

On the question of overcrowding, I think there is no one who will gainsay the remark that the housing emergency today is most acute for the poorest section of the nation, and that overcrowding is worse among the low-income group.

In 1941 we find, according to the census figures for that year, that 29 per cent of the entire population was living in overcrowded conditions. With the increased urbanization that has taken place since that time, and with the increased shortage of housing, that percentage would be much higher today than it was at that time. Even then, of those in the income bracket of \$1,500 or less, there were at that time 40 per cent living in overcrowded conditions.

That was the condition in 1941, and certainly it is much worse today. The ordinary worker in these days just cannot buy any of

the houses being built—certainly none of the houses built from loans made by the national housing administration. Last year the average cost of a dwelling unit, built with the assistance of loans from the housing administration, was \$8,056. The average in cities is much higher than that. For instance, in Toronto it is impossible to buy even a one-storey bungalow of three and a half rooms—including the bathroom—for \$8,000. Today accommodation of that kind ranges anywhere from \$9,000 to \$10,000.

On the assumption that the purchaser should not spend more than 20 per cent of his income on housing accommodation, there are only two or three groups of industrial workers who could possibly buy any of the houses being built. On that basis the only people who could buy even the very cheapest houses built with the aid of national housing administration loans are some who are working in the western coal-mining industry, the metal-mining industry, the steam railways and the pulp and paper industry.

Industrial workers in all of the nine leading industrial groups in Canada, including those engaged in manufacturing, iron and steel production, the automobile industry and building construction, receive incomes which, on the basis set forth by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, would preclude any of them from buying even the cheapest houses built.

Therefore there is today a great need for housing accommodation among people in that class. Of the 711,000 houses needed in Canada today I believe I would be correct in saying that by far the greater percentage of them are needed by those in income brackets which do not permit their buying at current building costs.

The bill that will follow this resolution will bring relief to that section of our people who are still living in rented houses that have not been decontrolled. As I have pointed out, large numbers of rented houses in this country have become decontrolled at various stages, but I understand that there is a fairly large section that will be affected by the bill to follow this resolution. I am quite sure that many hundreds of thousands of Canadians will breathe a sigh of relief when they read the minister's statement of this afternoon that there will be no further increases in their rents until April, 1951.

However good this legislation may be, it does not go far enough toward dealing with the root of the rental problem. Unless the federal government takes the initiative of entering into negotiations with the provincial governments whereby projects may be undertaken to provide low rental housing for the