

Canadian rental

by Jim McElgunn Canadian University Press

By 1983, the vacancy rate for apartments in most Canadian cities will be approaching zero.

Tenants will be forced onto waiting lists, and will have little choice about their accommoda-

Fewer and fewer people will be able to afford to live on their own, and many will be forced to double or triple up with friends or family.

Almost no new apartment construction will be undertaken, even as vacancy rates approach

Rents will rise at a rapid rate, consuming a much larger portion of tenants' incomes.

And "we will thus witness a substantial regression in housing conditions following 35 years of gradual improvement."

A horror story? Unfortunately, no.

All of the above predictions are contained in a recently-

Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) on the impact of prolonged high interest rates on the housing sector.

CMHC is a federal Crown corporation whose activities include subsidizing home construction and mortgages. It also monitors the housing industry and makes reports and recommendations to the government.

The CMHC report says that a rental crisis has been developing for many years, but current high interest rates have suddenly made it much worse.

"The present level of interest rates renders rental investment uneconomic across the country," states the report. Mortgages and property tax costs on a new apartment unit are \$750 per month at a 21 per cent interest rate, but the average metropolitan area rent is about \$400. So anyone planning to build a new apartment can expect to lose \$350 per month per unit at present interest rates, not even including operating

The result: the only new rental accommodation built will be for the well-off.

'There is no way to avoid needed adjustments in rental markets," states the report.

These adjustments require "a better correspondence between investor costs and market rents for new units." In other words, dramatic increases in rent.

The situation will ease over a period of years if rents are allowed to rise sufficiently, states the report. But in the meantime tenants will endure a severe crisis marked by long waiting lists and little choice of accommodation.

This has already happened in Vancouver, where rents rose about 80 per cent in the last year, and the vacancy rate remained at about 0.2 per cent. Most tenants are reluctant to move out because they do not think they will be able to find another place, and thousands of people have been forced to look for one or more roommates. Tenants must now allocate a much larger share of their income towards rent, and many must take any place they can

The trend is spreading. Vacancy rates slid about a percentage point in most metropolitan markets between April 1980 and April 1981. They are at or



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The Dalhousie Staff Association (DSA) would like to wish all students the best in the coming semester, and all of 1982!

THE DSA IS 750 HIGHLY TRAINED CLERICAL AND TECHNICAL EMPLOYEES (MANY OF WHOM ARE UNIVERSITY GRADUATES) WORKING "BEHIND THE SCENES" IN OFFICES, LABS AND LIBRARIES ENABLING DALHOUSIE TO FUNCTION. WE FULLY SUPPORT STUDENTS IN THEIR NEED TO GET THE MOST FROM THEIR EDUCATION DOLLAR, AND FEEL DALHOUSIE'S 1982 BUDGET (WHICH RECOMMENDS STAFF CUTBACKS AS ONE MONEY SAVING DEVICE) WILL SERIOUSLY THREATEN THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION HERE AT DALHOUSIE. WE THEREFORE STRONGLY SUPPORT THE DFA IN ITS EFFORTS TO STOP THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS BUDGET.

WE HAVE BEEN WITHOUT A CONTRACT SINCE JUNE 30, 1981. AND ARE STILL SEEKING A REASONABLE SETTLEMENT THROUGH CONCILIATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION. YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE DSA WOULD ENHANCE OUR PROSPECTS OF **OBTAINING A GOOD CONTRACT -- BETTER WORKING** CONDITIONS (JOB SECURITY, WAGES, ETC.) WOULD GIVE US THE RECOGNITION WE NEED TO BENEFIT YOUR EDUCATION!!