

National Housing Act

towns in the rural areas are just as vitally affected by measures of this kind as the large city centres.

A report by the Ontario department of municipal affairs in 1962 set out this situation very clearly. For example, it pointed out that in Sault Ste. Marie 55 per cent of the structures were classified as less than good. The survey conducted in the city of Kingston again showed evidence of blight. The survey showed that many of the homes were seriously lacking in necessary facilities for good housing. Hamilton had pockets of substandard housing, which was also set out in the report. In Windsor over 25,000 structures were examined, 13.3 per cent found vulnerable to blight, 3 per cent totally blighted and others partly blighted. The report also discusses Ottawa, where out of 5,385 units examined there were 4,370 which had serious deficiencies in sanitary and housing facilities.

One of the worst places in the province of Ontario, and perhaps in all Canada, is my home city of Toronto, where very little progress has been made in the matter of public housing in the last five years. In 1958 the metropolitan council set itself a target of 1,000 units a year but now, five years later, they have only erected about 550 in total.

This is a situation which has developed all across the country; it is not restricted. It is in contrast to some other areas which have promoted this type of housing very adequately and have therefore been much more successful. The city of Newark in New Jersey has built twice as many as the whole of Canada, yet its population is only 500,000 compared with Canada's 18 million.

We were particularly pleased to hear in the minister's speech the emphasis he properly laid on the need for public housing and urban redevelopment, because these are two of the areas which have been tremendously neglected. The minister was very tactful in his speech, and admitted quite candidly that progress to date had been something less than perfect. That is a diplomatic way of putting it. I suggest instead that to date it has really been an abject failure. One of the problems we seem to have in this house and which I have experienced is that everyone seems reluctant to admit that problems exist in case they start an argument as to who created the problem, and we seem to spend as much time trying to allocate responsibility for a particular problem and in blaming the cause on a particular government as we do in trying to devise some sort of effective and realistic programs to deal with them.

My main interest in participating in this debate at the second reading stage is that I

feel what we should be concerning ourselves with is not just the passage of this bill but with what is going to happen after the bill receives royal assent. Words and phrases do not build houses, and the good intentions expressed in the bill are absolutely useless unless they are carried out with tremendous initiative, energy and vigour. I think we should be more concerned about how this bill is carried into reality than with the clauses themselves, and I will suggest to the minister some proposals for his consideration which I think will enable us to make this an act really worth while and productive of concrete results.

The first thing I think the government should seriously consider is the creation of a ministry of housing which should be headed by a full time minister. For too long in Canada we have failed to recognize that good housing, at prices which people can afford, and good citizens are intimately connected; that the provision of good housing is every bit as important as the provision of family allowances, pensions, hospitalization schemes and other welfare measures. We have paid lip service to this principle in Canada, but I do not think we have ever really accepted it. Yet the connection between housing and good citizens is so obvious to me that I do not think it needs any documentation.

Governments in previous years have largely regarded housing as some sort of economic pump primer. When construction was dragging our governments have tended to turn on the tap and let some mortgage money flow out in an endeavour to stimulate the housing industry, not so much through a genuine belief in a housing scheme as an inducement to employment and as a means of attempting to stimulate the economy. We saw an example of that in the \$500 winter construction bonus, which was primarily designed to provide employment and was not particularly concerned with housing itself. It is also significant that this scheme is not administered by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation under the minister but is under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Labour.

Over the years our housing agencies have been shifted from one department to another, and they are now under the control of the present minister. Presumably when another minister is appointed after the by-election in Saskatoon there will be another shifting around. This has really lowered the whole approach to housing.

I do not think we have ever recognized the tremendous need in Canada for a genuine national housing program. I know it is difficult. I realize that housing problems have to be worked out in the context of the federal