

The Address—Mr. Knowles

Now, Mr. Speaker, I seem to be picking up newspapers today, and I have another one in my hand. This is the issue of December 31, 1954, of the *Winnipeg Tribune*, a newspaper published in my own city. There is something on the front page, again of a human interest nature, which I enjoyed reading as I am sure all did who saw it when it was published on New Year's eve. The *Winnipeg Tribune* has followed the practice in recent years of inviting its readers to send in nominations as to who should be given the fictional title of "citizen of the year for Winnipeg". For several years they have been carrying on the practice and various people have been named. The newspaper has simply followed the practice of awarding that title to the person whose name is sent in by the largest number of its readers.

This year the title of citizen of the year was given by the *Winnipeg Tribune* to a very good friend of mine, a chap with whom I went to college years ago, the Rev. Fred Douglas, minister of old St. Andrew's United church on Elgin avenue in the heart of the constituency of Winnipeg North Centre. This minister of the United Church is indeed a very fine chap in every way; and in his own right, being the kind of person he is, and in view of the kind of service he renders, he deserved beyond question the honour which was accorded to him not just by the *Tribune* but by the readers of that paper. I think hon. members will be interested to know why the Rev. Fred Douglas was awarded the title of Winnipeg's citizen of the year. It was because of something he organized, something he did for old age pensioners.

Two and a half years ago a few little homes for old age pensioners were built under his leadership where couples who had nothing else on which to live but their \$80 a month—in that case it was always a couple that had to go into the quarters—could find a place to live. It took a good deal of hard work on his part, a good deal of going around to people who had a bit of money, to get them to help him out. He was able to get other people to donate various services—and they, too, deserve credit—and he was successful at that time in getting that first project under way. It was recognized by everyone as such a good move, drop in the bucket though it was, that Mr. Douglas was encouraged to go on and do something more.

During 1954 he was successful in opening another of these projects near the church of which he is minister, right in the heart of my constituency. This time he was able to build two rows of houses that are joined together to provide accommodation for twelve single old age pensioners and also adjoining

quarters in which a married couple live who look after the premises generally. In addition there is a common room where the people who live in the individual units can get together. The arrangement is that only people who have nothing but their old age pension to live on are given an opportunity to live in these homes. Single persons pay just \$12 a month but, in view of what has been put into the project, that covers the cost of maintaining these homes.

I will not take further time to give additional details so far as the homes are concerned. What I think is interesting is that this service to old age pensioners, this attempt to provide homes for these people, was so widely recognized in Winnipeg as one of the finest pieces of work done by anyone in our city in 1954; hence the overwhelming number of those who took the trouble to write the *Winnipeg Tribune* as to who should be citizen of the year said that this was the man, this friend of the pensioners, this man who did something to make life a little better for at least a few of Winnipeg's older citizens.

I want to pay my personal tribute to what Fred Douglas has done, and I pay a similar tribute to other individuals and organizations in Manitoba and other parts of the country who, here and there, have done something to provide homes for senior citizens. I know of other projects in Manitoba. I know of a project in Vancouver and of one in Windsor. No doubt there are others, though they do not come to my mind at this moment.

The point that impresses itself upon me is that citizens generally like to see something done for old age pensioners. What a fight we have had across the years to try to get the old age pension in the first place, to get the means test abolished, to get the amount up to \$40 a month and to get something paid at age 65. This government acts as though the people of Canada did not want their money spent in that way, but in that view the government is wrong.

I say these letters of tribute to Fred Douglas show that the people of Winnipeg feel that something should be done for old age pensioners, and I am satisfied that the people of Winnipeg are no different from the people of Canada from one end of the country to the other. I say to the government that I feel it is not responding to the good will of the Canadian people. It is not aware of what is in the hearts of the Canadian people when it sits back and thinks it does not need to do anything more about old age pensioners, and can just let things remain as they are. The only word about old age pensions we see in the newspapers is that