

Housing Commission

may have huge books at the end of the year? The government do not want peace, order and good government, but they do want ream upon ream of paper in the statute books. With that burden on their backs they will tell the people, "Here we are, with this great legislation that will save you." Surely they will never be bold enough to tell the Canadian people that the legislation passed by this government would save them. That would not be true. "This is not the time to look to the past," states the right hon. gentleman opposite. "Let us look to the future; let us look for spiritual values; let us look for wider hope"—and still the people do not laugh. I cannot understand it. I do not know why the people take it seriously, because the government is not serious. It is election propaganda, that is all there is to it. I am strongly opposed to the policy of this government because up to now every step it has taken has been a complete failure. The past is the best guarantee for the future, and judging by its past the future of this government is rather dark.

I have said enough for the moment, but I shall have something further to say at a later time. I say most earnestly, sir, that I cannot accept policies of this kind until they are based upon facts. The government have ignored the facts purposely in order to leave us in a false paradise. It is superfluous to add that that is a great mistake. Sir, no person is a better friend of the labouring man than the one who now addresses you. He has shown it on many occasions since he has been a member of this chamber, but he refuses categorically to let the labouring man be deceived by any false hopes, and it is for that reason that upon this occasion he voices his strong objection to the resolution.

Mr. CHURCH: Mr. Chairman, I wish to say only a few words about this resolution. The housing committee of which I was a member was appointed and during its sittings examined witnesses from all parts of Canada, from Vancouver to Halifax, following which it made its report. It is my view that we will not get anywhere if we approach the problem from the standpoint of politics. Housing is not a political question; it is a business and social problem. Owing to the scarcity of houses in the larger cities and towns of Canada we have an emergency situation, and a condition which has both social and economic sides. Carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers, lathers and mechanics of all kinds in our larger cities are out of work and on the dole. England has been the pioneer in housing. She has recovered faster than any other country because she has had proper housing facilities

[Mr. Pouliot.]

and insurance policies. In the British budget presented this year £15,000,000 is voted for housing. Over there they have had different types of housing schemes. In this country whatever is done I hope will be done immediately. At a meeting of the city council in Toronto held a short time ago it was decided to await the action of this parliament.

The resolution proposes the establishment of a dominion housing commission, staff and officers, to be authorized to make agreements on housing with, and to vote funds to municipalities or other bodies along the lines indicated. In 1919, at a time when there was acute unemployment in Canada, this parliament voted \$25,000,000 for housing, nearly all of which was paid back. Out of the moneys advanced to municipalities and agencies the government did not lose hardly a dollar. I trust any housing policy which may develop will be free from politics, and that it may have some kick in it, and that houses will be built.

At its meeting held only a short time ago the city council of Toronto proposed to take advantage of the legislation passed by the provincial legislature last session whereby municipalities might lend money to house and property owners to make improvements. Many people who own houses cannot pay their taxes, let alone do any renovating or improving. I hope that whatever is done may be done immediately so that city councils throughout Canada will know how much help they can get.

I have already referred to the provision made in 1919. It is now proposed to establish a housing commission and a housing policy whereby twenty per cent of the cost will be supplied by the government, and the balance by mortgage companies and other builders. I do not know how that would work out in the larger centres of population. I should like to see adopted a resolution such as I presented on January 23 of this year, in which it was proposed to set up a national housing, building and reconstruction policy for Canada, adapted to our circumstances, and get people back to work and off the dole. No person suggests we should go as far as England or the United States in this particular matter, but we should accept a policy adapted to our financial circumstances, one which would take the people in the larger centres off the dole, and give them money in the form of work. Undoubtedly unemployment is the greatest problem with which we are faced.

When the first meeting of the housing committee was held away back last February I