

Unemployment

Then the minister went on to say that our difficulty in Canada is seasonal unemployment. But that is not the whole difficulty, by a long sight. I would like to know if the government has any policy to solve the problem of seasonal unemployment. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Harris) is going to be given the opportunity next week in his budget speech. Perhaps then he will make some declaration about policy. If we cannot smoke out the Prime Minister and get him to make a declaration this week, perhaps we will get it from the Minister of Finance next week.

Two or three weeks ago a resolution was sent to the Department of Labour from the Winnipeg labour council. My colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, made reference to it today, and as it was not among the papers submitted to him perhaps I might deal now with some of the points mentioned in it. It says that the labour council calls upon the federal government to take measures to meet the unemployment situation immediately by—

(1) Starting a public investment program federally, municipally and provincially, to build houses, schools, hospitals, roads and so on.

The Winnipeg labour council, along with other labour councils across Canada, are asking for a three-way partnership in this, but it should not be an even three-way split so far as responsibility goes, because obviously the municipalities of Canada are not in a position to pay as much as the federal government, which is the principal taxing power in Canada.

The labour council asks that more homes be built. There is a drastic need for them, despite the evidence which was given by officials of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation last year in the House of Commons committee on housing. I maintain that there is a need for over 500,000 houses in this country. This year we may have built 105,000 or 110,000, and I ask you to note that these houses were not built for those who needed them most. No, they were built for those who could afford them most, those whose incomes are, let us say, above \$4,000 a year. The majority of Canadians do not earn that much money a year. It is for them we have to build houses, and we have to build them on a subsidized basis.

While I am all in favour of a man having a sufficient stake in his country so that he may own his own home, nevertheless it is a demonstrable fact that there are a great many who would prefer to rent their homes. For these people, if the proper accommodation is to be provided, rentals have to be sufficiently low that they can afford to pay them which,

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in turn, will mean subsidized housing. But the government has turned a blind eye to this whole procedure. It is against the concept of subsidized rental housing. That is one reason there is so much immobility in labour today. It is all very well to say that labour ought to become more mobile, that labour ought to go about from town to town looking for work. But if a man has a stake in his own home, and has a family, he will think several times before he will leave that home and go to another city without any certainty at all that work is going to be available for him. Government policy has helped to make labour immobile.

There are other homes needed. There are homes needed for the aged people in this country, for our old age pensioners, to permit them to spend the evening of their lives in some decency. There is no reason why this government could not co-operate with the provinces and the municipalities in the building of homes for old age pensioners, on a subsidized basis, whereby these old people could know some happiness in the last years of their lives.

Then we need schools in this country; we need them desperately in almost every city. It may be said that this would be federal aid to education. But in the past this government has not been averse to giving federal aid to education, and it has introduced supplementary estimates to help rebuild schools gutted by fire. One of the problems of the municipalities is that they are faced with the necessity of providing either schools or roads. I have in my constituency the two municipalities of East Kildonan and West Kildonan, and in these areas are many married couples with young children. The taxing powers and revenues of those municipalities are quite inadequate to build both schools and roads. They have to make up their minds which are going to be built. Quite rightly the money goes toward the building of schools; but this still leaves people living on streets which at this time of the year are almost impassable.

There is scarcely a province in this country that does not need more hospital beds and more hospital accommodation. Here is an area in which the federal government could help the people of Canada all across the country by providing the financial assistance necessary to build hospitals where required.

Another way in which the minister might be of some assistance next week would be in relieving the municipalities of the sales tax they have to pay on so many things they buy for the uses and purposes of the municipalities. One of the worst examples, of course, is the sales tax which the municipalities