

National Housing Act

who with a little encouragement—I am not saying this can be done on a large scale—in the use of logs and in the value of cedar shakes for roofing and siding could be provided with homes at a lower cost than is the case today if they built them themselves under supervision. Such homes would add something to the landscape and to the diversity of housing in Canada.

Before I conclude, Mr. Chairman, I want to bring another matter to the attention of the minister. I think more research should be carried out in connection with fireproof paints for wooden houses or other wood structures. I have made many inquiries and I find that very little is being done today even by the national research council, other research organizations connected with the government or by private industry although I understand that the United States defence forces have produced a reasonably priced fireproof paint or stain that can be sprayed on shingles, shakes and lumber which will then resist an unusual amount of heat. I suggest to the minister that some consideration be given to research in that direction because it would lessen the fire losses in a good many cases, particularly where there are hazards created by chimney fires in winter and things of that sort.

That is all I have to say at this time on the resolution. I trust that the minister will give some consideration to my suggestions which he knows are always on a very sound basis indeed.

Mr. Smith (Lincoln): Mr. Chairman, I had not intended to speak on this matter but since I have been engaged in house building for a good many years and have built a good many N.H.A. houses I thought I should like to bring to the attention of the minister a few things to which I should like him to give consideration. I am sorry that I was not here to hear his address at the beginning of the debate but I should like to join with others in congratulating him for the splendid job his department has done in providing money for the building industry. Nobody realizes better than the minister just what this money does. It not only provides jobs in the building industry but it provides a great many jobs in industries allied to the building industry such as those making plumbing supplies, furnaces and a great many other things. So I am sure that what the minister has done has probably been more effective than what has been done by any other department in preventing the country from falling into a greater recession than at present.

However, several things have come to my attention. One is that while the building

industry has probably had one of its best periods in the last two years, nonetheless industries such as those engaged in the manufacture of hardware and plywood are now at about the lowest level of production they have experienced for many years. That is particularly so of the hardware industry. If any industry in Canada should be busy today it is the hardware industry. In Ontario we have five or six good hardware manufacturers such as Yale and Towne, Toronto Lock, Peterborough Lock and Belleville Lock but, with the exception of Yale and Towne, they have practically all gone out of business. Yale and Towne is now importing into Canada almost all the locks it sells. In the last week I went with a delegation from the united electrical workers to see the Department of Trade and Commerce in connection with this matter. The government was asked to do something to try to stimulate the hardware industry in Canada and to prevent so much importation at a very low tariff rate.

Then there is the plywood industry. While softwood plywood has not been too badly affected yet, nonetheless about 64 per cent of hardwood plywood, a lot of which is used in housing today, is coming into Canada from foreign countries. A great many plywood plants in Ontario and other parts of Canada have gone out of existence. To me this is a very serious problem and I would ask the minister to give the matter serious consideration because, after all, I think the Conservative party is pledged to support home industry and the manufacturing of more of our own raw materials.

There is another matter I should like to bring to the attention of the minister having to do with the cost of building lots. In the last five years we in the industry have seen building lots go up in price from about \$500 to \$5,000, and in some cases even more. All communities are not affected but in areas like Toronto, Hamilton, yes, St. Catharines too, the cost of land has gone up to a point where it is creating quite a hardship for people who wish to buy lots in order to build homes.

I have always been a great supporter of the land assembly scheme. I think it would do a great deal toward eliminating much of the middleman's profits and making land available to builders and home owners at a reasonable cost. The land assembly scheme is a three-way scheme whereby the municipalities, the provincial government and the federal government work together to buy land, put in the services and make it available for building.

Another problem is the cost of low rental housing. I do not think that we have really