

I am in favour of the government carrying out its present plans or any arrangement it has with the municipalities for slum clearance and other matters having to do with housing, because without adequate housing there would be no public health, notwithstanding the health security programs announced by federal and provincial and civic authorities. The first duty of a government, as I see it, is to look after the health, wealth, peace, happiness and prosperity of its citizens. All the various statutes, plans, blueprints and other remedies which have been proposed by municipalities, provinces and the federal government, cannot be carried out because of the lack of materials and of labour. It shows that in a national sense we have been unable to make, on a percentage basis, any real contribution to solving our national housing difficulties. For the reasons I have given, to provide housing should be the national function of the government.

We are in very difficult days. At a time like this, when we are in an emergent condition, the federal power should deal with the situation. In my opinion housing should be a national problem because the government have almost unlimited methods of finding revenue. They have also control over immigration, tariffs and trade, banks and banking. They can bring anyone they wish into this country. That power is given to them under section 91 of the written constitution which this country obtained in 1867.

Through the medium of Bill 280 another housing act is to be passed, amending the National Housing Act, 1944 and 1945. In this bill are set out the powers of approved lending institutions. They may take steps to safeguard mortgage securities and indebtedness. The bill also gives powers to enter into contracts with builders, and to guarantee rentals from rental housing projects. The terms and conditions of such undertakings are also given. The bill deals with rents for rental housing projects in the form of mortgages, terms of contracts and transfers. It deals with the transfer of property of Wartime Housing Limited to the new corporation. In spite of all these many statutes which have been passed since this housing matter was first brought up, there is still a national housing problem in the urban, rural and suburban areas. Things have been so mixed up by all these various statutes that the municipalities are in a quandary.

I would give some constructive suggestions to the minister and to the government. I have had a great deal of experience, notwithstanding what the hon. member for Parkdale (Mr. Timmins) said. Probably I have had a vaster experience than anybody in the house,

because I dealt with one of the largest agencies of housing, namely, transportation. We took over the street railway which served only the old city. We built a new civic railway for the new half of the city and linked the whole city up in the new system. I do not know any constituency which owes so much to the vision of public ownership as ward 6, which is part of the constituency represented by the hon. member for Parkdale. I remember when they had no harbour improvements on the waterfront in that ward. They had the Mimico section of the York radials, running from the old Sunnyside level crossing—a death trap. They had the Toronto suburban running through wards 6 and 7 to Guelph. In 1920 these were all included when we purchased the York radials, and that was a great aid to housing. I described what happened in my friend's own district. The most important thing was the building of a railroad, city car lines in the new part of the city north of Bloor street and St. Clair avenue. We built the city car line system from 1915 to 1921 and it had a beneficial effect on housing. Practically the whole district of wards 1, 6 and 8 and the north Toronto district were built up by it.

Talk about what was done by those who came into the house a few years ago! I am disappointed in some of the young men who have come into parliament recently. I venture to say that if some of them had had the control of the city of Toronto when I was head of the city council, Mackenzie would have got a renewal of the street railway franchise, because there was only one man in the council who opposed it, and one newspaper—the five other newspapers gave their support to the purchase deals. The action that was taken at that time, however, went a long way toward solving the housing situation in our city. The light and power franchises were taken over by the city and the Toronto Transportation Commission started with a civic system of buses and radials. The metropolitan railway on Yonge street from Lake Simcoe to the C.P.R. north station was taken over also in 1920-21. The Scarboro section of the York radials from Woodbine, on the Kingston road to West Hill was also made part of the T.T.C. civic system. The whole York radial was acquired by the city and all its various sections. The Mimico section, Sunnyside west of the Humber to Mimico, at the level crossing at Sunnyside, was developed after these franchises were removed. In that district there was only one road, which was very narrow, and that was the Lake Shore road.

I have been discussing cause and effect in the housing situation and the condition that