

Discussion on Housing

Winnipeg, an area represented by my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). I want to quote a couple of paragraphs:

Half the families living in greater Winnipeg, are living in houses or apartments that are overcrowded, or substandard from the point of view of construction or sanitation.

Or else they are living doubled up—two families in a dwelling designed to be used by one family; or they are paying more for their shelter than they can afford.

It goes on to say:

There are only 2,000 dwellings in the city designed to satisfy the needs of the 35,000 Winnipeg families (about a third of the total number of families in the area) whose income is so low that they need some form of direct subsidy to be able to live in decent homes.

The *Winnipeg Tribune* in June, 1967, carried a report about the town of Thompson which is the centre of a large nickel development. Last week my colleague from Sudbury spoke about the problems in Sudbury. In Thompson the International Nickel Company has announced its intention to double its work force over the next few years from the present 3,000 to 6,000. At present there are workers in Thompson who are paying \$150 a month for one room and their families are still living in Vancouver, Edmonton or Sudbury whence the men came to find work. What is the future for those families? What is the future of that town? The minister has announced a policy covering an increase in mortgage rates which will effectively prevent these people from ever being able to buy homes.

The *Winnipeg Tribune* in March, 1967, carried an article which dealt with the problem of some of the rural people, particularly the problem of the Métis, and I would like to quote one paragraph:

In the community of Ebb and Flow on the west side of Lake Winnipegosis live 329 persons. They live in 52 log and mud dwellings, most of them with one or two rooms. Several families with 7 to 10 children live in one room. Other families with 9 to 13 children share two rooms.

I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker, but I think hon. members and the public in general know the conditions under which our Indian and Métis people are living. Yet last week the Minister of Labour and last night other members of the government tried to brush aside this problem and to suggest that there is no problem. Mr. Speaker, there is a problem. It is a problem which must be met. It is a problem which must be dealt with.

[Mr. Orlikow.]

If there is one thing the government has demonstrated it is that it simply has not got the ability to deal with this question. I think the Minister of Finance put the government's housing policy so clearly in one sentence that nobody, even members of the official opposition, could misunderstand what it is. I want to quote that sentence because it clearly gives the principle under which the government is working. Hon. members will find it at page 2734 of yesterday's *Hansard*, where the Minister of Finance is recorded as follows:

We plan that the bulk of housing should continue to be financed through the market, as it has been in the past.

What does that mean, Mr. Speaker? It simply means that people who want to find housing accommodation, whether it be individual houses which they will buy or apartments which they will rent, will have to depend on the market. They will have to depend on builders and contractors getting money from the lending agencies.

For some years a situation has existed in which there is a tremendous demand for construction. There is a demand for houses, individual homes. There is a demand for apartment dwellings. There is a demand for building motels and hotels. There is a demand for building modern, luxurious, air-conditioned office buildings. There is a demand for building grocery supermarkets. It is a tragedy if one cannot drive within three minutes to a supermarket, and so it is necessary to build another one three blocks away. There is a demand for filling stations and service stations on every other city block, if not on every block.

Is there any member of the house, any member of the business community, who does not realize that under these conditions, when we obviously cannot meet all of the demands, housing simply cannot compete for money with business and industry which do not care about costs? I say in all seriousness to the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Forrestall), who asked what our solution was, that if we are going to build housing accommodation, whether it be individual homes owner-occupied or rental accommodation, in anything like the number of units we need we are not going to be able to do so until the government of Canada, in co-operation with the provinces, is prepared to establish a system of priorities.

I give one very simple example from the city of Ottawa; at least, it is simple to me. Completed during the past few weeks in the