

The Address—Mr. MacInnis

government on the opposition side of the house, is this. All that the election settled was the majority that the government received. All the problems that were facing us when we left here on the 30th of April last are still present with us and still have to be solved.

Let me point out that the cost of living, which has been one of the important subjects of debate in the house for two or three sessions, is still going up, and is now at an all-time high. That means that many of our people are sinking deeper and deeper into poverty at a time when the country is wealthier than it ever was before. The housing situation, which has been Canada's No. 1 headache since the end of the war, is worse than ever. I have before me a report of the housing association of my own city of Vancouver dealing with housing conditions in the city in 1949. This is what it says in part:

At the beginning of 1949, the housing situation in Vancouver was worse than it had ever been. As a result of the continued influx of population (22,000 into the city alone in 1948) and in spite of the high rate of building, the city was 5,000 dwellings shorter of its requirements than it was at the end of the war.

That is a problem that the election did not solve, and while it remains the opposition must not remain inarticulate.

Then there is the question of unemployment, which is increasing and adding to the hardships of an ever-growing number of workers. As to the social services of the country, there is an inadequacy which is becoming ever more glaring. It is becoming increasingly more difficult for people past middle age to find employment, and there is nothing in the speech from the throne to meet that situation, or to ameliorate their distress. Then I would mention one other item, foreign trade, which was discussed this afternoon by the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton). There our position is daily becoming more precarious.

These are only some of the problems which were with us during the whole of the last parliament and which the election did nothing to solve. It is very doubtful that the huge majority now enjoyed by the Liberal party will do anything to spur the government to greater activity. It has never worked that way before. It is far more likely that the large majority will lead to complacency and that the "social journey" will become an extended stop-over, at least until shortly before the next election. This, then, is no occasion for an excess of sweet reasonableness on the part of the opposition. As far as the party with which I am associated is concerned we shall always, Mr.

[Mr. MacInnis.]

Speaker, be reasonable, but you may not always find us sweet.

Now I want to deal with some of the questions which I said were not solved, questions which in an aggravated form affect the constituency I represent. Mine is one of the constituencies of the city of Vancouver. I am not going to say anything about its beauties, though it has its points. I will say that it is one of the most useful constituencies in Vancouver, because the great majority of its population are the people who do the useful work of the community.

Mr. Gibson (Comox-Alberni): I too was born there.

Mr. MacInnis: One thing I like about the constituency is that the hon. member did not stay there. Now a word about housing. This question will be before the house shortly in more definite form, and I shall merely touch upon it on this occasion. A few days ago the Minister of Reconstruction and Supply (Mr. Winters) made a statement on the government's housing policy; but if that is the only policy the government has got I must say it falls far short of what the situation demands. It is not a new policy, as the minister was careful to point out in the concluding paragraph of his statement at page 121 of *Hansard*, where he said:

The policy as enunciated by the Minister of Reconstruction and Supply in 1946 is the keystone of our present policy; that is, the creation of conditions favourable to a large housing program by private individuals and companies.

I think I have shown that as far as Vancouver is concerned, at least, that policy is simply not working. We are now 5,000 family units shorter than we were in 1945; and if the policy is working more effectively in other parts of the dominion I have yet to hear of it. In addition there is less house building going on. For the city of Vancouver itself the decrease is forty per cent and for greater Vancouver thirty-four per cent, as compared with 1948.

If anything has been made clear beyond the possibility of a doubt during the past four years, it is that private enterprise will not and perhaps cannot provide homes for that section of the population which needs them most; that is, the people with low and moderate incomes, who generally have the largest families and who make up a majority of the population of our cities. The government guardedly admits that low-rental housing is necessary, yet its housing policy is principally designed to help those in the upper third of the income bracket, who can afford to buy houses. Until that policy is reversed and we set out upon a program of low-rental housing for those who cannot buy homes at almost