

The fact that the people on our farms in all parts of Canada have been obliged to sell their products at such low prices and have had to pay high prices for farm machinery and other manufactured goods has been largely responsible for the small amounts made available for housing.

In the November, 1943, issue of the *Economic Annalist*, published by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner), there is an interesting report of a survey made in several parts of Saskatchewan; in the prairie area, where we have our good farm lands; in the park area, where we have good lands too but where a good deal more work was involved in clearing the land; and in the pioneer areas, where the heroes of the last war were obliged to eke out a living. In this survey the houses were classified as "poor", "fair" and "good". In deciding whether a house would go into these different categories, the enumerators noted poor foundations, faulty roofs, lack of paint, windows missing, et cetera. In the best area in Saskatchewan only 6.1 per cent of the houses were classified as good, seventy per cent as fair, and twenty-three per cent as poor. In the park area, 9.6 per cent were classified as good, fifty-eight per cent as fair, and thirty-one per cent as poor. In the pioneer area, only 3.7 per cent were good, thirty-nine per cent were fair and fifty-six per cent were poor. In one of these areas—the pioneer area—the average value of the poor houses is given as \$207. I am amused, when members of the Progressive Conservative party outline ambitious programmes of housing, to recall the attempts which were made under the premiership of Viscount Bennett, when he was here, to re-house our farm people. We had in Canada in those days plenty of carpenters, lumber and paint. The only thing which seemed to be lacking was gold. Because we were short of money the farmers were not able to acquire lumber. The average value of the poor house in the pioneer area of Saskatchewan was, as I have said, \$207. The fair house was valued at \$524.

Mr. HOMUTH: Why pick out Bennett? What about the government in power from 1935 to 1939; what did they do about it?

Mr. NICHOLSON: As I explained on a previous occasion, the new administration from 1935 to 1939 were more generous.

Mr. HOMUTH: You traded a horse for a rabbit.

Mr. NICHOLSON: The houses built during the Bennett regime in northern Saskatchewan were on a \$50 unit basis. Engineers and architects were engaged to draw up blueprints to explain how a \$50 house could be constructed,

[Mr. Nicholson.]

where the windows should be; and you were required from this \$50 to pay for the lumber, the nails, the windows, the roofing and the floors—everything for \$50. But the new administration in 1935 increased the amount from \$50 to \$75.

Mr. HOMUTH: They supplied the nails.

Mr. NICHOLSON: You can build a much better house for \$75 than for \$50, but it is still a \$75 house. The nation which this year is going to spend very large sums of money did not seem able to visualize a more ambitious programme for carpenters and other men in the building trade, who had committed no crime, who were the victims of unemployment. It was the men in the building trade who were hit the hardest. I have in mind three ex-servicemen of the last war who were carpenters in Regina, who came north to my constituency, and were assisted by the administration of the day—\$100 each from the federal government, the provincial government and the city administration—to build fifty-dollar houses. These three men are fighting to-day for the second time in their lifetime and their sons are serving with them. Some people argued a few years ago that these men were lazy and good for nothing, but they demonstrated before and are demonstrating again that they are made of the very best stuff.

Mr. HOMUTH: Who said they were lazy?

Mr. NICHOLSON: We heard it in the house.

Mr. HOMUTH: The only member who ever said that the unemployed were lazy was the hon. member for Wellington North.

Mr. NICHOLSON: Apparently it was the policy of both administrations to keep the people ground down, living in these log shacks, without floors or adequate windows, for they had no other way of getting the wherewithal to build a house. Although they could get lumber at \$5 a thousand cut from trees on their own farms, they could not get from the administration \$5 a thousand to cut lumber to put partitions in their houses.

Therefore, it is encouraging to find that some recognition has been made of the deplorable conditions on the farms in Canada. In this connection I note some comments regarding the case for farm electrification:

The report of the Manitoba electrification inquiry commission has made the most substantial contribution to understanding of the subject and to the material needed for formulation of policy, in recent times. Its considered judgment is that electricity on the farm has profound and far-reaching effects upon the social as well as upon the economic aspects of farming. It reduces drudgery upon the farm as it has done