

Generally speaking it is conceded that not less than 75 per cent of the present back-log of demand for housing emanates from families in the lower income brackets, that is to say from families financially incapable of paying more than \$35 per month at the very most for the homes they occupy—and many of them far less than that—without depriving themselves of many of the normal necessities of life. From this it naturally follows that—theoretically at any rate—three out of every four of the new living units now being built should properly not cost the occupant more than \$35 per month to rent or carry.

Actually, since V-J day, only about ten per cent of all the new living units made available could be rented or carried for \$35 per month or less, the great majority of these being war-time houses built for veterans.

Over-all progress in the production of new living units since the war ended has been just about all that could reasonably be expected, with labour and materials conditions as they have been. All things considered, we have done well in this respect and this fact demonstrates that our trouble lies not in lack of capacity to produce but rather in the nature of what is being produced. The real source of our trouble is that we have been, and still are, utilizing about 90 per cent of all of our house-building resources to build new living accommodation which is beyond the financial means of 75 per cent of the people who are in need of it.

It is as obvious as anything ever could be that unless definite action is taken to reduce this unbalanced situation in the housing field, wages are bound to go on rising. There can be no dodging this issue. We either have to devise ways and means of making living accommodation available to people in the lower income brackets at rates which they can afford to pay, or reconcile ourselves to the inevitable necessity to go on increasing the wages of these lower income groups. Whether we like it or not, we are going to be compelled to follow one or the other of these alternative courses.

The only conceivable means of bringing new living accommodation within the means of low income groups lies in subsidization and common sense dictates that no plan of subsidization will ever be successful unless it is based on co-operative action on the part of the dominion, provincial or municipal governments along pre-determined lines, making possible the development of a practical formula which could be quickly applied in solving the problem of providing living accommodation within the means of low income families in all parts of the dominion.

Mr. MacNICOL: May I ask the hon. member a question? I did not hear him very clearly. What did he say was the monthly rent?

Mr. BLACKMORE: The monthly rent was \$35.

Mr. MacNICOL: It is too high for the ordinary low-bracket wage earner.

Mr. BLACKMORE: According to Mr. Price, seventy-five per cent of those who require houses are unable to pay more than \$35 a month.

Mr. MacNICOL: That is right.

Mr. BLACKMORE: That is my point. Even the twenty per cent which has been referred to as the normal reasonable percentage of a person's income which ought to be spent on housing is an outrageous figure. I do not think that a person getting \$1,500 a year can pay twenty per cent on housing and still get the necessities of life.

We have a good example of successful housing in Stockholm, Sweden. The city builds its people houses. There is an article in the *Christian Science Monitor* which tells how Stockholm has provided thousands of low-rental apartments with state aid and finance for 500,000 of Sweden's 6,000,000 people. First there is a community building corporation.

Mr. MacNICOL: Does it give the rental rate?

Mr. BLACKMORE: I will come to that. There are also several co-operative building associations and several community building associations. The corporation finances five per cent of each apartment house for rental.

There is a rental rebate for children under sixteen. For example, for every child under sixteen there is a rebate of ten per cent of the rent. The initial rate of rent is \$360 for a three-room flat with kitchen and bath. According to this arrangement a family with three children would be paying only \$250 a year rent for the kind of accommodation I have indicated, while a family with five children would pay only \$180 a year. I submit, Mr. Chairman, that that is a proposal which sounds something like common sense. If a nation like Sweden, with limited resources at its disposal, is able to find such a way of solving its housing problem, what can be said of its failure to do so of a nation like Canada with the vast resources which we have at our disposal?

Mr. MacINNIS: They have a socialist government in Sweden.

Mr. BLACKMORE: It is all right to talk about socialism. We can use the methods adopted there without going socialist.

Mr. MacINNIS: But they will not.

Mr. BLACKMORE: The point is we can. There is not a thing in this Swedish proposal that could not apply to the city of Ottawa, not one single thing, without going socialist. It is just plain common sense. It has been done for hundreds of years.

Mr. KNOWLES: That is socialism.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Well, some aspects of socialism make common sense, but others certainly do not.