

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 55/12 THE HOUSE-BUILDING INDUSTRY IN CANADA

An address by the Minister of Public Works,
Mr. R.H. Winters, at a meeting of the
National House Builders' Convention, Toronto,
March 29, 1955.

Post-War Programme

In opening my remarks today, and before discussing present developments and perhaps contemplating the future a bit, I would like to refer to our post-war house building programme as a background. I don't wish to suggest that the number of units built in itself represents the only measure or even the best measure of the accomplishments of the house building industry. It has been necessary to emphasize quantity in the period we are considering, but at the same time it is important to pay adequate attention to the kind of houses, and their setting. I will say more on that point later.

Since the end of the war, in round numbers there have been over 800,000 houses built in Canada. They have been built by you people, by others in the industry you represent, by the Government and by some who do not belong to your industry but who choose to build their own houses. It has been a substantial accomplishment.

These houses represent an investment of 6.8 billion dollars and provide accommodation for more than 3 million people, something more than the combined populations of Greater Montreal and Greater Toronto. Visualize five Vancovers--eight Winnipegs--or 25 Halifaxes.

Economists like to think of these houses in terms of employment, or the demand for building materials, and I must say that I myself get some satisfaction from such concepts. In Toronto, for instance, last year's housing programme provided an average of close to 20,000 man years of employment in on-site construction alone. On-site employment is apart altogether from the employment opportunities afforded in Toronto by the servicing of raw land for residential use, and by the production and distribution of building materials for the new housing.

Municipal officials probably think of housing in terms of miles of trunk sewers, water mains, and roads, or in terms of the provision of new school facilities.