

National Housing Act

this house has given them. I am concerned, however, with the fact that close to 80 per cent of our population lives in the urban areas of this country. This parliament, if it is to be relevant, must manifest its concern with the perplexing and pressing problems of the urban crisis. If we do not do this now and over the period of the next ten years we will live to rue the day, just as is the case now in the United States of America.

This country has changed; it is changing. There have been changes which could never have been contemplated by the Fathers of Confederation over 100 years ago. We are not addressing ourselves to the problems. Canada has become a highly industrialized state instead of predominantly an efficient agricultural economy. The human pressures we are experiencing are tremendous. We must study and carry on dialogue in respect of these problems as we have done in respect of other things in this house. We talk about the subject of regional disparity which is so important to this nation. But I suggest with great respect that unless we address ourselves to the consideration of the problems of the urban areas there will never be the wherewithal to solve the problems of regional disparity in this country because the wherewithal will come not like manna from heaven but will be generated in the urban areas of this country.

At last the time has come to give consideration, however brief—if we do not make it brief we will never get this bill through before the house recesses on June 27—to the gut issue of housing which affects many people in the area I represent and a 300 square mile highly populated megalopolis of over two million people contiguous to it. I find it difficult to explain to my colleagues on both sides of the house the paradox that exists today in metropolitan Toronto. There is a great deal of wealth on the one hand and the abject and grinding poverty of the rat-infested slums on the other, these pockmarks and pimples of poverty which exist in that city.

There are approximately 16,000 families now in metropolitan Toronto who have their names on the list for public housing and about another 5,000 elderly people waiting for public housing. This situation has been brought about because approximately 60,000 people have been added to the population of metro Toronto each and every year for the past 20 years. We have seen our population grow from 650,000 in the old city of Toronto to

over two million in 20 years. We have tried to adjust to the explosive change. To the extent that we have it has been our accomplishment; to the extent that we have not it has been our agony and anguish.

Much has been said about whether there is or is not a housing crisis. I think this is an exercise in futility. Is there or is there not a crisis? One cynic said that for those who are housed at prices they can afford there is no crisis but for those who are not housed there is. There is no housing crisis right across the board throughout this country like there was during the war years when people were scrounging around for rooms, but there most definitely is a crisis in the sense that the lower economic echelon of our population, of our society, desperately needs decent housing in a decent environment which they can buy or rent at decent prices or prices they can afford. Certainly there is no crisis for middle class people who live like royalty. The task force report indicated that we are one of the best housed nations in the world. So we are for the middle class and upper echelon people. We have gimmicks and gadgets which cannot be exceeded by kings and princes throughout the world. But for the lower income earners no such millennium has been reached.

I suggest, with great respect, that we must help the lower income group, those earning \$8,000 or less. The man who wants to retain his dignity, self-respect and pride wants what we all want out of life, to be a somebody. He wants to have a piece of the action in our society. Maybe we should gear interest rates to income instead of gearing rents to income. We want to make people productive members of our society, people who will pay off the mortgages on their homes and mow their lawns. Do not force such people to be disinherited members of our society, hopeless and helpless so that they feel there is nothing to look forward to. A man should not be placed in a position where society has him licked. He is the backbone of this nation. He has the responsibility of trying to educate his children. He is not a welfare case. We should not make him into a welfare case. For those who are below this income level we need low rental housing.

I do not think that the task force report should be relegated to the scrap heap. There are a lot of things contained in it that should be studied, discussed, read and reread. We read in it about the loss of dignity and self-respect on the part of the people who live in