

Mr. Speaker, while the ministers, the governments which are succeeding each other ask Parliament to grant millions of dollars in a given sector, establish new departments to fight unemployment, to develop construction, they keep on putting up hypocritically with an 11 per cent sales tax on building materials, further to the 8 per cent provincial tax. Meanwhile, the situation in the area of housing keeps on worsening in spite of these measures.

Mr. Speaker, it is not I who will say it. Before beginning my quotation, I would like to remind the House that we hear frequently: When housing is doing well, so is the economy. When it is doing bad, so is the economy. It is often said that this is one of the true barometers.

Mr. Speaker, on page 5 of the report that I referred to earlier, one can read and I quote:

In absolute terms, the income per capita and gains per capita (excluding government transfers) are both below the national average,—

● (1710)

And this concerns the province of Quebec.

In Quebec, per capita personal income amounted to \$3,027 in 1971 as compared with \$2,443 in the Atlantic area, \$2,778 in Saskatchewan and \$3,967 in Ontario.

That is the income situation. Is the situation improving in spite of allegedly good measures, both in the field of income security and social security as in the field of lodging and other areas, for example, economic expansion?

Page 6 reads as follows and I quote:

So, in Quebec per capita personal income in 1967 was \$235 below the national average but, in 1971, \$378.

Therefore, the income situation which would permit to buy a house grows worse and worse.

Let us take another item dealt with in the same report and concerning employment in the building industry.

We are told that the building of houses should be encouraged, that a new organization similar to the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation is going to be created and that a new interest rate corresponding to the cost of living will be established. The governments have of course no control over this; they are controlled by those who control the cost of living. Now let us consider what is said about the employment rate which was to increase. On page 35 it is stated, and I quote:

The employment growth decreased during the second half of the last ten years and mainly in the service area. Between 1966 and 1971 the employment rate decreased by 25,000 workers in the building industry.

There was an employment decrease of 25,000 people in Quebec. And the minister will tell us that his policy was effective up to now and therefore that it was a good policy.

Mr. Speaker, I would advise him to read other departments' publications; he could see that the object of his policy up to now was to get votes. The damn well lied—as people usually say—as we know that according to this report, employment in construction decreased by 25,000.

That is what is being said on housing, considering as always the so-called good measures we have tolerated far too long, in housing in Canada. While reading the speeches from the ministers of that time, be they Progressive Conservatives, Liberals or NDP, one was under the impression

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that that was going to settle the problem, to provide a solution. Now let us see how things really stand. On page 36 of this report, under the title "Housing", one can read and I quote:

Housing: The main housing problems in Quebec are a matter of quality in housing and means of acquiring a house rather than a matter of quantity.

You will understand why in a few minutes. It is very simple: the birth-rate is falling.

I come back to the quotation:

The standards normally used to determine quality in housing show a steady improvement; it remains that Montreal and the province of Quebec—

And at this stage, I invite the minister to listen to me with great attention.

—it remains that Montreal and the province of Quebec as a whole have twice as many overcrowded dwellings than Toronto and the province of Ontario respectively.

—Moreover, in Montreal in 1971, more than 24,000 housing units did not have running water (6,000 in Toronto) and 16,395 units had no bath or shower.

And this situation existed in Montreal, in Canada, in 1971.

Mr. Speaker, how can we improve this situation? If people live in tenements, it is because they cannot afford to buy a house, because their income is too low for them to obtain the money they need from the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation or the other financial institutions. And it is not with a bill such as the one before us, which will contribute to put people further in debt, that we shall solve their problems. I see that 24,000 units in Montreal—right here, in 1971—have no running water and that 16,395 have no both or shower, I believe that it is my duty to ask the minister to think twice before saying that all it takes to solve the problem is another "rigging" of government officials who will investigate and determine what the problems of housing are.

Mr. Speaker, this situation is revolting, and on page 37 of the report, we read that:

Low income families—

Some hon. members suggest that Creditistes have coloured dreams when we say that the monetary and financial system are the root of the problem.

I continue the quotation:

Low income families—

How many are there of these in the province of Quebec? In 1967, there were 248,000 low income families in Quebec.

Low income families (248,000 families in Quebec in 1967) must frequently spend an excessive portion of their incomes on housing at the expense of other essentials, unless they accept to live in overcrowded or substandard lodgings.

—without baths, showers or running water.

This problem is particularly acute in the cases of our senior citizens and Indian population (35,000 people in Quebec); the latter are the worst off in the province, as far as lodging is concerned.

And it is not over yet. I read on:

In Montreal, housing stock increased by 47 per cent between 1961 and 1971—