

HOUSING: THE ROLES OF INDIVIDUALS AND GOVERNMENT

An address by the Minister of Resources and Development, Mr. Robert H. Winters, made to the Winnipeg Real Estate Board, February 9, 1953.

...No group of real estate men needs to be told that we Canadians are living in an expanding economy. Our cities are rapidly growing by reason of industry and other activities, and in the outlying areas we have perhaps an even more spectacular growth in the fields of engineering and industrial development. Throughout the nation business and economic conditions are buoyant by any standard of earlier years. More people are employed, more goods are being produced, and capital development is at record levels. This is true for the country as a whole but it has particular emphasis in our urban communities. Ever since the turn of the century there has been a distinct trend towards industrialism of Canada, with resulting urbanisation. As a result we have seen even greater growth in our urban communities than in the nation as a whole. To illustrate my point, I think the Province of Saskatchewan is a good example. In the last census period there was a decrease of about 7 per cent in the population of the Province as a whole, but the four largest cities had an increase of 33 per cent in the number of families. In Manitoba the population increased in this period by 6.4 per cent. But the Greater Winnipeg area had 18.0 per cent more people. In the suburban municipalities of Greater Winnipeg the increase was 51.8 per cent.

Housing in Winnipeg

Families needing accommodation in Greater Winnipeg in the post-war years have received assistance in large measure. In the years 1945 to 1952 inclusive, there have been 20,600 housing units completed. Of this 3,560 units or about 17 per cent were built directly by the Federal Government. They include veterans' rental projects as well as married quarters for the Department of National Defence. In addition, about 46 per cent have been erected under the terms of the National Housing Act. The Federal Government, through Central Mortgage, has been associated with the construction of about 63 per cent of all the houses built in Greater Winnipeg in the post-war years.

The 1952 completions, at 2,093 housing units, were about the same as 1951 but less than in the period 1947 to 1950, which averaged about 3,200 completions a year. The lesser number of completions in 1952 reflected the low level of starts in 1951. However, going into the year 1953 there were 1,670 housing units under construction, some 300 more than the corresponding carry-over into the year 1952. If the Spring starts follow a normal pattern, then the completions of new houses in Winnipeg will be considerably higher than they were in 1952 and may approach the level of earlier years.