

**GOOD HOMES NECESSARY**

Housing Problem Depends on Land Problem, Says Prof. Sissons

Social Welfare Session — Many Speakers Urge Reforms and Education of Opinion

(Toronto Globe)

"All your education fails, all your hoarded money fails, unless you have growing up everywhere throughout the country happy families of children comfortably housed in attractive surroundings," said Professor C. B. Sissons, secretary of the Ontario Housing Commission, giving the first address at yesterday afternoon's session of the Social Welfare Congress, held at 21 McGill street, with D. B. Harkness of Winnipeg presiding. Professor Sissons outlined the history of the movement for better housing in Ontario. In the course of this sketch he referred to the recognition of state responsibility in the United States by the appropriation of \$175,000,000 toward war housing; of the recognition of state responsibility in England as far back as 1851, and of the appropriation on Dec. 2 of \$25,000,000 for housing in Canada. In the United States, he said, the grant was simply a war measure, but in Canada it shows that in peace as well as in war the government recognizes its responsibility.

**A Progressive Act.**  
The Ontario housing and accommodation act of 1914, Professor Sissons said, was one of the most progressive acts on the statute books of any country. Only one company has, up to date, been organized under the provisions of that act, and that is the Toronto Housing Company, whose enterprises on Spruce street and Bain avenue are very creditable, and whose 242 apartments and eight houses are always occupied and have also a long waiting list. "You can never settle the housing problem until you do something to settle the land problem," said the speaker, and spoke of the laying out of streets and the placing of houses and of the iniquity of having apartment houses on the outskirts of the city, outside the city limits, where every family ought to have its own home and its own plot of ground. Attractive, convenient and sanitary homes, he said, ought to be within the reach of the ordinary wage-earner, some of whom were now paying 40 per cent of their income for rent, when much of it ought to be spent for other things. In England 20 per cent was considered the maximum proportion of the income that could just be spent for rent.

**Will Remember the Reactionaries.**  
Mrs. A. M. Huestis recommended that the women's organizations of Toronto concern themselves with the housing question. Eleven years ago a group of women got busy and made a survey which revealed some dreadful housing conditions. If Toronto had taken the right action then, on the information these women placed before them, it would have saved millions of dollars. There wouldn't have been the crowded centres, and there wouldn't have been the 50 per cent advance in the cost of building that now have to be contended with. As to the men who voted against

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a housing commission for the city of Toronto, Mrs. Huestis said: "Now that we have a vote, we're going to remember them." Mrs. Huestis described also the Local Council of Women's Housing Scheme for business women, where, on Bain avenue, sixty-five young women have comfortable homes, where eighty-six could be comfortably accommodated, and where, by doubling up, 150 could be housed.

**Responsibility of Citizenship.**  
"The greatest service which your council can render to Canada today is to give the people a sense of their responsibilities as citizens," said G. Frank Beer's paper, which, in his absence, was read by Professor Sissons. Social progress, he said, is governed by the measure of responsibility attached to citizenship. We need many things, but above all we need a new attitude toward community life. As long as we look upon social service as philanthropy or as an adjunct of religion, we will not get that new attitude. We must approach it not as altruists or reformers, nor from the standpoint of uplift, but as our plain duty as citizens. "I maintain," said Sam Carter, M. P. of Guelph, "that the government should not trust to companies, but should take charge of the building of houses for working men. A \$2,000 house, he said, could be paid for in instalments, and at \$20 a month would be less than rent, and would complete the purchase of the property in ten years. Mr. Carter would have the government also stop the gambling in land. There should be no temporizing with the thing. The

necessary land should be expropriated. The railways do it, they take our home and they run through our sacred ceremonies, and why shouldn't the government do the same for our workers?"

**Standing Committees.**  
A resolution was brought in by Mrs. C. Hamilton of Ottawa, head of the Victorian Order of Nurses, providing that the congress ask the social service councils of Ontario and Canada to consider the question of housing at their business sessions, and, if thought wise, to appoint standing committees to promote by such measures as they see fit the movement for better housing. This was passed after a number of short speeches had been made in support of it.

Dr. Peter Boyce thought something composite ought to be done in the way of an organized attempt to bring opinion to bear upon the government in the matter of land reform. Thousands of acres are out of cultivation around Toronto, and has anything been done as yet to remedy the matter from a legislative standpoint? If the land speculators are allowed to take up the land that is needed, the whole community will have to be taxed for workingmen's houses.

Hugh Dobson of Regina spoke of the necessity of housing going hand in hand with careful town planning, and said he would like to see Mr. Adams, at Ottawa, set aside wholly for town planning and all our cities given the advantage of his advice. Some "company" towns, Mr. Dobson said, were so filthy that we wouldn't allow our cattle to live under such conditions.

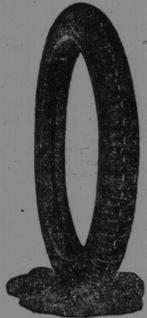
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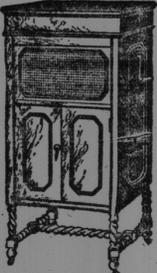
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