

The Address—Mr. A. Stewart

enterprise cannot be expected under any circumstances to provide the type of housing which is needed for the underprivileged third of the Canadian people who are earning less than \$1,600 a year.

If these people are going to be housed adequately, then housing has to be subsidized; and since the financial power in Canada is in the hands of the federal government then the federal government must take the responsibility for the subsidizing of these homes. We know that the Canadian housing industry is one of the most inadequate and incompetent industries there is. It is still in the horse and buggy age. Therefore there should be some impetus on the part of the government towards improving the methods of building, and when the legislation comes before the house perhaps the minister will be able to tell us what has been done by way of research.

Mr. Ferrie: May I ask the hon. member a question?

Mr. Speaker: With his permission.

Mr. Ferrie: May I ask a question?

Mr. Stewart (Winnipeg North): Surely.

Mr. Ferrie: Do you want all the material in the cities? You are talking about housing. Do you want to have all the material in the cities?

Mr. Stewart (Winnipeg North): I certainly do not want all the material in the cities. If the hon. member had been listening he would know that I was dealing with the situation about which I have firsthand information. I have some knowledge of the situation in rural areas, but any firsthand knowledge which I possess is of the cities. I said that the situation which exists in Winnipeg can be duplicated in other cities, and I also pointed out the lamentable lack of facilities on the farms. Certainly there are slum homes on farms as well as in the cities, and I want to see slum homes on the farms eradicated just as quickly as possible.

One of the things which I noticed in visiting some of these houses in the city was the prevalence of old age pensioners in slum homes. They had no desire to be there, but with the present pension of \$40 a month they have hardly any other alternative. Furthermore, many of them in Manitoba were paying as much as \$20 a month for rent which left them \$20 a month, if they were lucky, to subsist on for the rest of the month. I am convinced that the government will yet adopt another measure which we have advocated for so long and increase the pension to \$50 because the need is desperate. I am just as convinced that, despite the fact that the

[Mr. Stewart (Winnipeg North).]

other night the government would not vote for the removal of the means test, and our amendment was defeated, they will yet be compelled to remove the means test. The government will also be compelled by force of public opinion to lower the age at which the pension is payable to sixty-five. I know many instances of men who have worked on the railroads, and who are retired compulsorily at the age of sixty-five, very often with a small pension of \$25 to \$30 a month. They have to live between the ages of sixty-five and seventy on that miserable pittance, and it is impossible to make ends meet. In their old age they are compelled to go out and seek further employment. That is not right. I do not think it is humane to expect our aged to go out to work for their living after they have reached the age of sixty-five.

Speaking of pensioners there is one other matter which has been brought up in the house on many occasions, and which I now bring up again, a matter in which the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) and I have been interested. I refer to the men who went out on strike from the C.P.R. shops in 1919. Many of them had many years of employment with the Canadian Pacific Railway. In 1904 that company had instituted a non-contributory pension scheme. When there were wage negotiations between the men and the company, the company frequently informed the men that it was building up this pension plan, and that the men should accept payments into the fund by the company as an increase in wages. Very often wage increases which were well merited were not given.

In 1919 came the strike, and the men who went out on strike were rehired afterwards with complete loss of all pension benefits. I point out that the Canadian Pacific Railway is the only organization in Canada which has continued to discriminate against its employees in this manner. Representations were made repeatedly to the C.P.R., and in 1939 Mr. Coleman, then vice-president, said:

We have kept in close touch with this matter for a considerable period of time, always encouraged by the hope that sufficient improvement might take place in the financial condition of the company as to enable us to realize a firm conviction which we have always held that, in such improved conditions at least, some relief might be forthcoming.

Heaven knows I can read a balance sheet, and the position of the C.P.R. has improved appreciably over the years. Yet there has been no alleviation whatsoever forthcoming.

As a result of the representations which were made to the government, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mitchell) appointed an investigator, Mr. Johnstone, who in his report came to the conclusion that a royal commission should be appointed to investigate the matter,