

*The Address—Mr. Fleming*

**Mr. Fleming:** I wish the people of Canada would understand that when conditions in the city of Hamilton, such as I have just described, are referred to in the House of Commons the government members opposite have chosen to laugh at them. I hope that fact will be heard in Hamilton.

**Some hon. Members:** Laughing at you.

**Mr. Fleming:** The account proceeds. Let hon. gentlemen opposite continue to derive humour and merriment over the plight of these unfortunate people in Hamilton. I continue:

Welfare officials described incidents of broken homes, unhealthy living conditions, children bitten by rats, parents boarding their children out, and effects on school children.

"The story on housing in this city is so heart-breaking I could not begin to describe it," said Mayor Lloyd Jackson.

At one point, the mayor was so moved he broke down and could not continue. Tears streamed down his cheeks and he had to reach for a glass of water before he could resume his faltering remarks.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Fleming:** Again the description of an unhappy situation in Hamilton has evoked derisive laughter from government benches. I proceed. This is a statement made in Toronto on October 6 by a gentleman who is well known for his welfare work, Mr. F. N. Stapleford, general secretary of the neighbourhood workers' association. A press account of his statement is as follows:

"Neither Toronto nor Canada is solving its housing problem. The many houses which are going up are simply taking care of the expansion in current housing needs. There is a big backlog which is not being touched," he added. "We have as many people in Canada in urgent need of housing now as we had five years ago. In Toronto there are conditions prevailing which are nothing short of disgraceful!"

Further down, after giving a description of conditions in Toronto similar to that I just gave of conditions in Hamilton, which provoked so much merriment on the part of government supporters, he says:

"Housing is Toronto's No. 1 social problem," Mr. Stapleford said. "If a city-wide survey was made, the number of families in one or two rooms—and often paying exorbitant rent—would be very large."

Let us next hear from an expert of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Let hon. gentlemen opposite laugh at this. These are statements made by Dr. O. J. Firestone, economic adviser to the Department of Trade and Commerce and Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Let them laugh at this statement made by Dr. Firestone on September 18, as reported in the *Globe and Mail* of that date:

"Population and economic growth have been so rapid in the last decade that housing has not kept pace with the growth," Dr. Firestone said. "This

[Mr. Laing.]

is indicated by the fact that in 1951 the number of families without homes is estimated to exceed 500,000, or about twice the number in 1939 and about two-fifths more than in 1945."

Canada may thus be facing by 1955 a situation similar to that in 1945, with backlog requirements larger than ever before and further expansion still ahead.

"Thus we may find that at that time it will not be enough to build the close to 100,000 units per year—our accomplishment between 1949 and 1951—but an even larger number. Perhaps between 115,000 and 130,000 units per annum will be necessary," he said.

Then further down:

The economist said it had been estimated that in the 1949 housing program, when some 90,000 housing units were built, about 235,000 Canadians were employed the year round either in building houses or in supplying the necessary materials and services. By 1955, he added a 130,000 unit program might provide employment for over 300,000 persons.

Then, let me give another statement by a gentleman who ought to know something about the housing situation in Canada. This is a press statement attributed to F. A. Mager, president of the national house builders' association. It was made in September last in Winnipeg, and reads as follows:

Hundreds of builders face disaster unless mortgage credit restrictions are eased, F. A. Mager, president of the National House Builders Association, declares. "Figures released by the dominion bureau of statistics show 40 per cent fewer dwellings were started in July than in the same month a year ago. The drop can be blamed on Ottawa's failure to regard housing as part of the national defence effort."

Then he had this further to say, and I ask hon. members to weigh these words well:

"Bad as the situation is now," he concludes, "it'll defy description next spring. Already the birth rate, immigration, and the influx of defence workers are jamming our great industrial centres. Attics, private garages and basements are full; trailer camps and shack-towns are springing up. Much of this congestion, with its disastrous effects on the health and morals of the younger generation, would be avoided if the government would ease its mortgage credit terms."

For these unhappy results this parliament is not responsible, because parliament was not consulted about the reversal of government policy last February. Parliament was not consulted about the withdrawal of that one-sixth mortgage loan. Parliament had no part in that, no voice in it. This was the act of the government; and the full fruits of this wretched and disgraceful policy are to be laid at the door only of the federal government.

We are told something about the situation in government publications. How critical is the situation? "Housing in Canada" for the third quarter, 1951, a publication of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, tells us at page 22:

The composite index of wholesale prices of residential building materials advanced to 283 in July, 1951, 18 per cent higher than the index at July, 1950.