

National Housing Act

half years since the war ended. Consider the tremendous amounts of material that have been made available for their construction, and then tell me where in all Canada you could have found a minister who would have done a better job. When I say Canada, indeed I speak of a territory too restricted, for it is a recognized fact that, according to population, Canada leads the world in post-war housing.

So I say to the minister, disregarding the critic and the cynic, continue your building efforts largely along the lines that in your good judgment and with your wide experience appear to you as best. The people of Canada have unbounded confidence in your ability and your integrity. They are proud of your clean, unsullied record, free from even any suspicion of wrongdoing. They recognize and appreciate the dynamic energy with which you are so richly endowed. So carry on.

Right Hon. C. D. HOWE (Minister of Reconstruction and Supply): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. McLURE: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. HARRIS (Danforth): I hope the minister is not speaking to conclude the debate.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Golding): The hon. member for Queens wishes to speak.

Mr. HOWE: There is a subamendment and an amendment to the main motion. I am speaking to the subamendment.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Golding): The hon. member for Queens will speak after the minister has finished.

Mr. HOWE: Mr. Speaker, I think I should say a word about the amendment and the subamendment, but first I wish to thank the hon. member for Brandon (Mr. Matthews) for his kind remarks about the minister, the first I have heard with regard to housing, and I must say in that connection I think he has made the only sensible speech on housing that I have heard.

Mr. MacNICOL: That is tough on the rest of us.

Mr. HOWE: I appreciate the contribution which the hon. member made.

I wish to say a word about the amendment and the subamendment. Of course the amendment to the motion is a negation of the subject matter of the bill. Both the amendment and the subamendment are want of confidence motions. The amendment simply says that we should not go into committee on the bill but that the government should consider subsidized housing. The government

[Mr. Matthews (Brandon).]

has considered subsidized housing. It has built subsidized houses, and I could give an interesting illustration. In co-operation with the government of Saskatchewan the government contributed buildings and large sums of money to convert those buildings into comfortable apartments. The management of the buildings was left to the province of Saskatchewan and the rentals collected are the property of the government of Saskatchewan. That would be an excellent place for a socialist government, which gives lip service to subsidized housing, to practise a little of what it preaches. What are the facts?

Rentals for the housing, largely paid for by the federal government, operated by the socialist provincial government, are somewhat higher than in corresponding localities in the rest of Canada. That is a clear indication that our socialist friends love to give lip service—

Mr. NICHOLSON: Give the rates.

Mr. HOWE: I will let you look them up.

Mr. NICHOLSON: You are making a statement. Back it up.

Mr. BENTLEY: Substantiate your statement.

An hon. MEMBER: Give the figures.

Mr. HOWE: I know the figures.

An hon. MEMBER: Give them.

Mr. HOWE: I know the facts.

Mr. BENTLEY: You have made a statement you had no right to make.

Mr. HOWE: No right to make?

Mr. BENTLEY: No.

Mr. HOWE: Did you hear the hon. member for Mackenzie (Mr. Nicholson) comparing incomes of 1941 with rentals of 1948? Was that a fair comparison? He had the figures for 1947; there was a census in 1946. You had better just calm down and take it.

We know all about subsidized housing. The difficulty with subsidized housing is that it does not build any more houses. A fair comparison of the situation arises in the wartime houses built in the period from 1942 to 1946. We built a great number of houses, several thousand of them, to rent at \$22 a month for the four-room house, and up to about \$27 or \$29 a month for the six-room house. These rents are very much below economic rents today, and yet the rental in most of these houses has not changed.

The problem arises in allocating the houses. How do we allocate them? We allocate them