

Housing

met with no success. Today, again, my hon. friend from Vancouver East (Mr. Winch) asked about them. I, myself, have asked about them on a number of occasions. The City of Vancouver has been sitting on the doorstep waiting anxiously but can get nothing from this government. It is true the Prime Minister says: We are looking at these bread and butter projects. What people need is not looking, but action.

They need a Prime Minister who can see that there are needs of this kind, one who does not have to be reminded by disorder in the streets that we need urban renewal and attention to urban problems. We were told yesterday by the vice-chairman of the Economic Council that if action is not taken to deal with poverty and these urban difficulties, we shall likely get disorder in Canada's streets along the lines of that experienced to the south. Does the Prime Minister look forward to a situation of this kind?

I should like to remind the government of the need of young couples who are starting to raise families, but who lack decent accommodation in which to do so. What is the sense of our spending money on education, on the rehabilitation of young people and in a host of other directions if we allow the very seedbed of Canadian citizenship to remain in such a poor condition? Good citizens cannot possibly be raised in some of the conditions we find in housing today, these fire traps and rat traps about which we have heard in so many speeches.

I should like to make a plea, too, for the elderly people who cannot find a place in which to live. When I was home at Easter many such cases came to my attention. An elderly lady was living in a small basement room; she had been told to leave and had no place to go. A mother was trying to raise two girls in one little room behind a store. She found there was a long waiting list for public housing, and that nothing short of death would create a vacancy. Even then, there were too many people ahead of her. And what about the 40,000 families where there is no father as breadwinner, or the families who are living on relief, or those which are supported only by the mother? These are the people of whom I am thinking, and they are to be found in every Canadian city.

When we get a replacement for the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer), I think we should get twins. It is no use having a minister of transport in charge of housing. The Canadian people are sick and tired of having

housing tied like an appendage to other departments. In the eight years since 1960, housing has been tied to five different departments. It has been shifted from one to another. What is everybody's business is nobody's business. Though the government pays lip service to the principle that housing should receive a high priority, responsibility for housing has been made an appendage of the Department of National Revenue, the Department of Labour, the Department of Public Works—I cannot remember the others for the moment. The Prime Minister could, of course, reserve it for himself. If he does so, he will be giving this responsibility to somebody who says he cannot see evidence of a housing crisis. In that case, it will become a little memory and will go the way of other memories connected with housing in this country.

I urge the Prime Minister and those behind him to see the writing on the wall while there is yet time. We have seen no disorder in our streets yet. We still have citizens who believe that the Prime Minister and the government intend to do something; that all the shiny new machinery that has been set up since the beginning of September will produce results and that all the extra civil servants are there for some purpose. They believe that the regional desks, the extra boards and commissions will be turning out services and facilities which the people need. While they still believe these things, let me urge the government to take action before it is too late. I suggest that the Canadian people will be patient only for a little while longer. When they find they will not get houses, when they find nothing will be done, there will be a change. The Canadian people are going to turn into something very different from the patient, quiet, well behaved citizens they have been. If the government will not solve these problems for the well being of the people and out of concern for the way the majority of the people in this country have to live, let them do it in order to save themselves while there is still time. We in Canada are patient, but there is a limit to our patience.

● (8:20 p.m.)

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants): Mr. Speaker, in the wee small hours of this morning, Mr. Jean Beliveau said "I am going to put an end to it", and did precisely that. I think there is a general agreement on this side that my contribution will wind up this particular game of overtime.

The history of housing in Canada has many chapters that could be considered studies in