

*Housing Prices*

do not mean a family of five or six living on \$4,000 to \$7,000 a year; I also mean a family of ten living on an income of \$10,000 a year. Surely one cannot disagree that such a family is in the low income bracket.

Let us consider some of the studies that have been carried out over the years. Just yesterday I was looking at a six-volume study on urban Canada by Mr. L. B. Smith. We also have the study by the Senate committee and its report on poverty, as well as the Dennis commission report. The minister has refused to table that report but there are 50 copies over in the offices of CMHC.

One of these books on urban Canada is called "Research Monograph 2," whatever that means. It is on housing and it reaches several conclusions. The first conclusion in this book is that to the extent our nation is better housed than ever in terms of number and basic facilities, there is no immediate housing problem. It refers to 1970. The second conclusion is that to the extent our construction industry has averaged approximately 200,000 dwelling starts per year and can provide sufficient dwellings for our population, there is no housing crisis.

The third conclusion is that to the extent shelter costs are not outpacing and are probably lagging behind income increases, so that housing accommodations are generally more affordable, there is no housing problem. The fourth conclusion is that to the extent there are few doubled families—180,000, or 4 per cent of all families in Canada in 1966—and a considerable number of non-family households, there is probably no housing problem. We find that first of all there is no housing problem, and when there is a problem it is not serious.

The report also suggests that to the extent there is a group of low-income families living or who were previously living in soon-to-be-demolished or previously demolished housing, there is a housing problem or, more properly, an income or poverty problem. Now we find an admission of the existence of a housing problem.

These are fine conclusions, but I suggest they are conclusions from a computer. In this case the author, Mr. L. B. Smith, suggests his conclusions are drawn from equations and variables and that people should look at the graphs and charts. They do not indicate how to build houses for the poor people. I am wondering about the source of Mr. Smith's conclusions, because the hundreds of letters I receive from poverty stricken Canadians cry out in simple language the fact that they need homes but cannot afford them.

• (1510)

I wonder what conclusions can be drawn from letters such as these? I quoted one in the House some time ago which is worth repeating. It is one of many hundreds I have received. This gentleman wrote:

My concern is about the shack we have to live in. It is infested with rats which have chewed large holes in the walls. I have to live on welfare because of a sick wife who is mentally ill and has an epileptic condition. And the doctor confirms this, indicating that the home is unfit for human habitation.

The hundreds of millions of dollars which are being directed into housing are going into areas in which the big builders want to build; they are not going into areas where they are needed. Just last weekend I visited one of

the communities in my riding and saw a man, his wife and four children living in a deserted school bus set up on the side of the road. If this is the type of housing involved in the wonderful plans of the government, then I wonder what is wrong.

I could quote many hundreds of examples such as these where Canadians are crying out for help. I wonder why there is nothing in "Research Monograph 2" to solve this type of problem. I also wonder if Mr. Smith could figure out by his ingenious methods of calculation how these people could get a decent home. I wonder if he could explain his conclusion that our nation is better housed than others in terms of numbers and basic facilities, and that there is no immediate housing problem.

I should like Mr. Smith to accompany me when I tour my district this summer and see the embarrassing and distressing situation which exists with regard to substandard housing, and then tell me that Canada does not have a housing problem. Everyone knows the government has been pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into housing in Canada. For one reason or another, much of this money is not being directed into areas where the need is greatest nor to those people who have the greatest need, the poverty stricken and lowest income families.

In the Throne Speech the government, as usual, told the people of Canada of its new approach to supplying lower income housing. This occurred around the first of the year. I was very optimistic about this, particularly the announcement that \$100 million or more would be directed toward providing ownership and rental housing for families earning less than \$6,000 a year. Funds would be made available for projects sponsored by non-profit community organizations and co-operatives, and for continuation of present assisted ownership programs. Funds would be made available for a program to enable low-income families to renovate or rehabilitate their substandard properties without an increase in their monthly cost of ownership or rent, and for a multimillion dollar neighbourhood improvement program focusing on rehabilitation and renovation of blighted areas.

This sounds fine and wonderful in a Throne Speech. It builds up the hope of Canadians. All I have seen, however, arising out of the Throne Speech is a bill in respect of residential mortgage financing which will provide more money through more agencies, which in fact is being done now by CMHC. The family with little or no income is still restricted in respect of assistance to improve existing deteriorated homes or to build something better for themselves, while the extra millions of dollars will still go to the speculative, big builders who will continue to locate massive housing units where the price is right for themselves.

In this regard, I should like to see the minister today table the Charney report which evidently ridicules the present direction of our national housing programs. Why does the Charney report state that housing is a by-product in an agglomeration of builders, developers and financial institutions committed to the routine of making money? Why does the report say that CMHC is oriented to market interest rather than to consumer interest? The private sector is involved in low-income housing only in so far as the delivery of this type of housing corresponds to the objectives of the influential members of the industry. I