

any housing problem. What are the facts? I received this week the 24th annual survey of vacant houses for the city of Winnipeg, issued by the health department of that city, and I want to congratulate Winnipeg upon having such an efficient department of municipal administration. On the first page of the report we are told that the total vacancies in Winnipeg, which I believe is the third city of Canada, are 111 houses and suites at the end of November, compared with 337 a year ago and 704 in the year before that. How does that compare with the statement made by the minister in November that in Winnipeg there was no shortage of houses? The percentage of vacancies in 1939 was 0.86 per cent; in 1940, 0.43 per cent; in 1941, 0.20 per cent; and this very carefully prepared report states:

It will be seen that we have reached an all-time low in the number of vacancies, which means that more and more families are having to crowd together. This condition is, of course, in conflict with our health and other by-laws, but it is evident that there is little we can do about it. . . .

The shortage of accommodation for the low-income group has been acute for years and I have referred to this over and over again in these reports. The present plight of the average working man to find moderate but satisfactory living quarters for his family is lamentable. . . .

Surely our present housing shortage cannot continue much longer. The risk to health of our sub-standard housing, not to mention that of the fire hazard in our nondescript tenements, much evidence of the toll in moral and mental standards, also the cost of crime, in our blighted districts. . . .

The doubling-up of families is one of the chief characteristics of slum areas and this condition is spreading like a cancer into some of our most exclusive residential districts. It is only a matter of time, therefore, when these districts will degenerate into blighted areas.

I object to a minister of the crown stating that Winnipeg has not a housing problem, in view of the fact that information of this sort has been supplied to the various cabinet ministers over a period of years. The officials of Wartime Housing Limited should have consulted the health department of the city of Winnipeg, to find out whether the statement made by the Minister of Munitions and Supply was correct. I say again that there is a very serious shortage of houses in Winnipeg, where large capital expenditures have been made in connection with the war effort. Hon. members will understand that after being at war for two years we should have some general plan with regard to the housing of our people.

I am interested in this subject from a peace-time point of view, but particularly concerned about the problem as it affects our

war production. It is impossible to get maximum production from people living in the sort of houses that I saw when I passed through Winnipeg last week. We had in Canada a national housing administration that had done commendable work, had made extensive plans for launching into the building of necessary temporary housing in areas where new houses were needed; but instead of giving this department, over which we have control, the go-ahead signal, we find a number of dollar-a-year men taken into war-time housing. The order passed at the time this department was set up went on to say that each of the directors would serve without remuneration. I believe we have had too many men who have offered their services without remuneration. Men who can give their time without remuneration are not necessarily the best men for the job. Without further delay we should have a comprehensive plan to deal with the acute problems of housing all across Canada.

At the Seignior club the other day some concern was expressed as to whether the work of the national housing administration would be discontinued. Here parliament is in session, but we have no statement as to whether this very important part of our national life is going to be overlooked. We are told that some \$20,000,000 have been spent in connection with war-time housing, but as a member of parliament I have had the greatest difficulty in finding anyone in any department here prepared to discuss whether we are getting good value for the money spent, whether the taxpayers can be assured that all is well in war-time housing. Without further delay there should be a clear statement made by the government as to its policy in connection with housing.

I come to another equally important question: What is the policy of the government with respect to the consumption of liquor in Canada? Again I refer to the bureau of statistics. Just to-day I have received the latest figures regarding the consumption of spirits, malt liquors and wines in Canada. I am shocked to realize that the Canadian people in this very critical period are spending so much of their money for and allowing so much of their labour to be engaged in the production and distribution of intoxicating liquors. The apparent consumption of spirits is reported as follows:

Year	Gallons
1939.....	3,433,664
1940.....	3,818,409
1941.....	3,714,790*

*A slight reduction.