

The Address—Mr. A. Stewart

this government which has the power to help. In this one area of Winnipeg fifty infants out of every thousand born will be dead at the end of the first year. Statistical records show that the infant mortality rate for Winnipeg as whole is 35. Therefore, because of the slum conditions and poverty in this one area, we are condemning fifteen infants to death. Yet we still prattle about our concern over human dignity and human life.

It is scandalous that a society should allow its human resources to be wasted in such a way. I can assure the government that the families of the poor have as much affection for their children as do the families making up any other group in this country. They suffer as much sorrow and heartbreak at the avoidable death of an infant as would any one in this chamber. And yet in this area in Winnipeg, as in other areas throughout the country, we have these slums and this increase in infant mortality which, as I said, is a shocking, scandalous and unforgivable waste of human life.

It has been said that statistics show that the slum population is moving. In my area the population is moving out of the slum areas, but what they are doing is simply to move from one overcrowded area to another. The population is moving but it is still doubling up and sharing accommodation with others. It is moving from one overcrowded area but is crowding another area and is spreading the wretched disease of overcrowding and potential slums further throughout the city.

I do not know whether the minister saw some of these slum conditions when he was in Winnipeg. If he had got in touch with me I should have been happy to have taken him around. I make to him the same offer that I made to his predecessor three years ago, and I shall willingly subsidize the minister. I suggest that he come to my constituency and live in a room in one of these slums. To make sure that he suffers adequately I shall give him \$10 per week, which is what an old age pensioner gets. Let him live in that room amidst filth and vermin and dirt and then at the end of the week let him come back here and tell us that he adheres to the same policies.

According to the last report I have received, in Winnipeg there is not one vacant apartment; there is not one vacant suite; there are 22 vacant houses, eight of which are unfit for human habitation and 14 of which are for sale. Yet I have here a report of 56 families made up of 22 adults and 58 children, 80 souls in all who have to live in stores, garages, sheds, shacks and cellars; but we are told that the time is not opportune to remove slums.

On other occasions I have told this House of Commons of the conditions under which some of our people live. I have here the report of Mr. Austin, chief inspector of the sanitation and housing division in Winnipeg. He reports one two-and-a-half storey house containing eighteen rooms in which 17 family units live. There are two water closets, one bath, one wash basin and three sinks to take care of those 17 families. The comment of the inspector is very brief, as follows:

Cooking and sleeping in every room. Unvented gas ranges.

Any one who has been in rooms like these knows what an unvented gas range can do to an infant lying in a cot or to a youngster who is brought up in that poisonous atmosphere. Here is another house of two and a half storeys containing 16 rooms in which reside nine family units totalling 30 people. There are three water closets, one bathroom, no wash bowls and five sinks. The comment is that the house is in very dilapidated condition, with defective plumbing and then there is the tremendous understatement that it is overcrowded and verminous.

There is another one-storey house of three rooms containing two family units made up of five men, six women and five children, 16 human beings in all. We are again reminded that there is gross overcrowding.

The next is a terrace of eight houses—88 rooms in all—in which reside 57 family units totalling 140 human beings. This terrace is reported to be in an advanced degree of dilapidation, continually in the city's hands for plumbing defects and so on. One could go on giving description after description of these houses in which people have to live against their wills. As I said, I have yet to meet a man or woman who wants to live in a slum out of choice and I repeat that this situation is not unique to Winnipeg.

The Curtis report which was published a few years ago should have warned, and indeed did warn, the minister of the situation. It said that for the next decade after 1946 there would require to be built in Canada 731,000 homes and that 543,000 homes would require substantial repairs in that time. According to the last statistical information in 1941 there were 650,000 farms that had no bathing facilities. Almost as many are dependent on outhouses for toilet purposes. In twenty-seven cities there were 281,000 houses with either no flush toilets or shared flush toilets. There are 428,000 houses with no baths, or baths which are shared. The housing shortage is not something new. The need for it has been evident for years, and yet the government apparently does not recognize its responsibility. It still depends upon private enterprise, and yet private