

not in keeping with the fullest interests of the country as a whole; it cannot be; for we are challenging the very existence of our homes, and when we touch our homes we are challenging the very centre of our national life; for no national life can prevail if there are merely houses, and not homes. Accordingly, when the Minister of Labour (Mr. Rogers) feels that the mayors of the various municipalities are getting, to say the least, rambunctious, and are becoming threatening, he must realize that they in their positions of importance have a responsibility to the municipalities which they represent, and that in their own way, in the way they think best, they are attempting to protect the small home owner in the municipality. I am sure that when the minister speaks, as he will in a few minutes, he will have much to say concerning the attitude of the mayors, and therefore I make this statement in advance of what he may say.

In conclusion, I would make one comment upon the general situation. We fully realize that throughout Canada, not only in municipalities but in rural centres as well and on the farms, there are thousands of houses which are unfit for habitation. Homes they are called, but homes they cannot be in the fullest sense of that noble word. This whole question of national housing is one the solution for which has been postponed too long. The hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Hanson), for whom we all have a high regard—

Mr. HANSON: Thank you.

Mr. MASSEY: —comes from a country of which he is justly proud. Those of us who have had the honour of visiting his native heath have realized the progress that has been made there particularly in connection with housing. The hon. gentleman himself may not have been to his native land in recent years; but he is a student who is constantly in pursuit of the finer things of life, and he realizes fully what his own country has done in that regard. I am sure that if he rises in his place to-night he will say that he could wish nothing more for the peace and happiness of his own constituency than that they should have homes at least as good as, if not better than, the homes one finds in Sweden, and these homes are not taxed out of existence.

We cannot contemplate such action as has been projected by the Minister of Labour without feeling that we are striking what is essentially a death blow to slum clearance and rehousing in Canada. It seems to me nothing short of a tragedy that at this time when hopes have been raised, when faith has been placed

in the thought that something might be done, for two and a half years nothing has been done in the way of housing. I fully realize that the national employment commission when it was appointed faced a gigantic task. I have nothing whatever to say to-night in criticism of the actions of that commission. I should not like to be accused of having forecast to-night anything that may not be brought down in the report of that commission, which has not yet been tabled and of criticizing something I have not seen. I say to the minister, however—and I know that he will not misunderstand me—that the question before the house at this time is one that must bring to mind at once not only the matter of the problem about to be handed to the municipalities of raising further funds for relief, not only the method by which those funds will be raised, but also perforce the whole question of national housing. And I am sure that when the minister replies he will make some statement in regard to this all-important subject, perhaps not in anticipation of the tabling of the report of his highly expensive national employment commission, but as an assurance to the people of Canada, at this critical time, that even though so far this government has turned a blind eye and a deaf ear toward those who have had to live under conditions nothing short of deplorable, and also to those who have lived in jeopardy from day to day lest as a result of ever increasing taxes they have had to pay they would lose that which they already have, there are under contemplation plans for the amelioration of the difficulties and hardships occasioned by slum conditions, and the total absence of low cost housing schemes.

Mr. G. E. WOOD (Brant): I feel reluctant to reply to hon. members from Toronto in this debate, which I might term a filibuster. I am not, I must admit, very familiar with the rules of the house, I do not know what the motion is. It seems to me, however, to be a sort of free-for-all for every member to air his own local disabilities, and perhaps it would be just as well if hon. members from Toronto would be like the Scotchman who wished that we could only see ourselves as others see us.

Some of the remote districts in Ontario may have a contribution to offer towards a solution of some of the difficulties which exist in the city of Toronto, because after all the demands that are made there are going to affect us in the more remote districts of the country. I have to admit that I admire the splendid way in which hon. members from Toronto, especially the hon.