

NOTES ON ADDRESS AT CHRIST THE KING CHURCH

Monday, February 4, 1946

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speeches*

Today in the city of Minneapolis, through the efforts of several organizations - the Mayor's Housing Committee, the Red Cross, the Council of Social Agencies, in the newspapers, over radio stations, and other agencies, we are starting a first class knock down, drag out housing rally to get people to share their homes in our city. Over 11,000 families in our city are looking for a place to live today. There are people who are living in dwelling units that are hovels unfit for any person who wishes to have any kind of family life.

The city along with private organizations are trying to find places that can be converted into living quarters. We are not asking for a gift - we are not asking people to just give the facilities - these places are to be rented - rented at good rent prices. Eviction may be accomplished at whatever time you desire. This is a community program - an attempt to answer a problem.

Today I am going to talk about the causes of the housing shortage - I want to point out how you can be helpful. If public officials take the problems to the people, the people will respond. It is impossible for public officials to answer these problems alone. Church groups, labor organizations, civic clubs, etc., working together can meet any problem if they want to do so. We have to understand the problem - causes, effects, etc.

My desire is to do a good job for the people. We have to have a code of ethics for public servants as well as in other professions. We need a set of standards to abide by - we need young people in

public service. Old ideas will not meet the problems facing us today - everything is changed. New problems are arising - juvenile delinquency rate is increasing. We don't need to be too alarmed. We must remember that a lot of hate has been preached in this country - that we had a great depression in which better than 40,000,000 Americans suffered, all of which was followed by World War II.

Wages, rentals, sales, incomes, all went up high in 1945. Now, the question is raised - Why ~~why~~ doesn't everybody have a place to live? Why do we have 11,000 people looking for homes? This housing shortage is acute every place - not only in Mpls. Even the smallest towns need new homes. The housing shortage is a result of many things. This country was never properly housed. We have always had many people living in hovels, as I stated before. When the income of these people went up, they wanted to leave this type of surrounding. They left these places in search of better living accommodations; therefore, there is no desirable place available today unless a person buys a residence built ten or fifteen years ago at twice the price they are worth. Veterans are buying homes today for three times what they are worth.

I think there ought to be price ceilings on the sale of residence properties. If prices keep going up - we will have to pay 3 or 4 times the value of what they would be in normal times. The marriage rate has gone up and these married people want privacy. Between 1940 and 1945, there should have been over 600,000,000 homes constructed whereas there were only a few over a million actually constructed. We need 25,000 homes in Minneapolis to properly house people.

80% of the correspondence that comes into this office is about housing. This problem is one that staggers us. There is a shortage of building materials. Why? Because the country spent so much money and materials on war. The average American was better taken care of during the war than at other time., in spite of the cost of war. We dislocated our economy. We can't rectify this over night; however, we haven't been idle. Our local government faces problems such as it has never faced before. During the depression, the city issued bonds for the care of the unemployed. But money today is not the answer to our housing problem - there is plenty of money. Skilled labor is part of the problem. The State of Minnesota has no program for housing. It is one of five states that has no housing program. We ought to get in line with the rest of the country. The State of Minnesota can well afford to give more than survey to the housing situation. We know there is a shortage of building materials, but we also know the government agencies can use pressure to obtain materials. We had no trouble when we built war plants - they were constructed quickly, readily, and efficiently. We can do the same things in the housing situation if we work together in this problem.

The City of Minneapolis has set in process several important things - for instance, the ~~relocation~~ reallocations of materials. 50% of all that is available will be contracted to home building. I had rather have a little government red tape and a few houses than no government red tape and no houses. Permits to build don't do any good without the building materials. Our office has worked with government agencies to try to get more materials. We have worked with the housing committee to try to get emergency housing and to

and in long range planning - to clean out the blighted areas. If I am Mayor when this program gets under way, hundreds and hundreds of homes in these blighted areas are going to be torn down. Many of these places have no inside plumbing nor any sanitary facilities, etc. Out of such homes come juvenile delinquents, health and police problems for the whole community. The only city that can afford slums is the rich city. Our city is taking the long range view and also the short range view. We have set up the Minneapolis Veterans Trailer Housing Project. My Assistant, Mr. Simms, in cooperation with the Red Cross is obtaining from the Federal Government, 107 trailers. On the 29th of December I asked the City Council for money for the establishment of an emergency housing authority. \$150,000 is available for converting school buildings, fire stations, etc. into living quarters. I looked at the pre-fabricated houses while in Washington. These houses are fully equipped for homes. The City of Mpls. is going to receive 350 of these homes within the next 6 weeks. There have been requests for 107,000 of these homes from all parts of the country. Minneapolis requested 1,000 - we received one third of our request. Our housing program in Mpls. is further along than any city in the country according to Wilson Wyatt. We have to have patience. We are not a little town any more. We were a war production center. War workers came in and are not leaving. 57,000 men are returning from the armed services.

The flow of building materials is beginning to pick up. Reconversion is taking place. Contractors are ready to go to work. Building tradesmen assure us that they would rather construct homes than industrial plants. We need all of it;

we have to have both. We have to be understanding. We have to have cooperation between city, state, and federal governments. Let's take the long range view point. The State of Minnesota should not excommunicate itself from the rest of the country. We need a good housing program. Idaho, Nevada, North and South Dakota are the only 5 states not receiving federal assistance, under the Housing Act of 1937. The Federal Govt. has given one billion dollars for the purpose of building low cost, low income housing for people that can't afford to pay high rent. We have to have a subsidized type of program. The federal govt. is willing yet Minnesota is without legislation ~~to~~. Why should we be against such legislation? We could take out the blighted areas, set up low cost homes, cut down cost of police and fire protection. A good home helps make a good family. The strength of this community is only as strong as its weakest link. There is only so much money to be given by the federal govt. and the longer we wait, the farther down the list we are going to be.



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