HUMOR COLUMN

HOUSING

The "housing problem" is more and more causing concern among Canada's experts — the politicians, welfare workers, etc. They could to advantage turn their attention to Britain where three Labor governments and numerous Liberal and Conservative governments have devoted several generations to the problem.

The "Manchester Guardian Weekly" (Sept. 26) reports the situation as it stands today. There are at least 603,000 slum dwellings still occupied. "Other estimates put the total at over 800,000." The total number of homes in Britain is 26,500,000. Of these "nearly half was built without some, if not all, of what are considered minimum essential amenities — hot water, a bathroom, and indoor lavatory, an adequate kitchen, and a decent place in which to store food." About 2,800,000 houses in Britain were built before 1862; 3,300,000 were built between 1862 and 1900; 1,500,000 between 1900 and 1919.

With an election coming up the politicians in Britain, Labor, Liberal and Conservative, unabashed, are again busy telling what they are going to do about the problem, causing the "Guardian" to comment, "If words made bricks and if political platitudes were a sustitute for mortar, Britain would be the best housed nation in the world."

This observation however will not prevent the "Guardian" from supporting the Liberal and Labor contingents in the coming election. Nor will it prevent Canada's own political wizards from promising now to remedy an evil that still needs remedying several generations from now — unless the workers tackle the job.

* * *

PENSIONS

The Canadian government has just increased the salaries of members of parliament $8000 a year and old age pensions $10 a month. Claude Jodoin, president of the Canadian Labor Congress, takes the platform to offer his comments — on the ten spot.

A couple of years ago Claude was up to his ears in efforts to bring the New Democratic Party into being. Only such a party, he insisted, could bring about the happy life everyone wanted, which same was to consist of health plans, housing improvements and a lot of other things — not overlooking increased old age pensions.

Now he looks upon the ten, which received the blessing of the NDP, with misgivings. Not that it compares unfavorably with the $8000; he doesn't mention that. But he thinks it isn't going to last long. He thinks there are greedy eyes fixed upon it. He thinks the landlords and other rascals are going to reach out and lay hold on it and that the pensioners will gain nothing from it.

* * *

CONVERSATION ON WHEAT

"Canada has just sold a big pile of wheat to Russia, I hear."

"Yeh. That's good. It will bring money to farmers and lots of other people."

"But reduced supplies of wheat may cause prices to go up, don't you think?"

"Yah. That's good. It will bring more money to Canadians and stimulate activity generally."

"But the price of wheat going up will cause the price of flour and bakery products to go up too, won't it?"

"Yeh. That's good. Prices will find their proper level and preserve the balance in our economy."

"And the price of foodstuffs going up will cause the workers to demand more wages. That's good too, eh?"

"Yeh. That's good. Christ no! That's inflation!"

J. M.

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