

Bill Bosworth, 1980s

Single Displaced Persons Project

Single Displaced Persons Project (1983) "Hostels and Homelessness," Toronto: The Single Displaced Persons Project (mimeo).

Single Displaced Persons Project (1983) "Younger Men: A Demographic Survey," Toronto: The Single Displaced Persons Project (mimeo).

Bosworth, Bill, *et al.* (1983) *The Case for Long-Term Supportive Housing*, Toronto: The Single Displaced Persons Project.

Sample from news accounts

Hostels called as costly as apartments

Saturday, **February 22, 1986**

BY PAUL TAYLOR

The Globe and Mail

It costs about as much to keep people in hostels as it does to build permanent accommodation for them, an inquest into the death of a Toronto bag lady was told yesterday.

Currently, Metro Toronto and the provincial Government pay \$9,125 a year (\$25 a night) to maintain a bed in the average Toronto hostel, Bill **Bosworth**, executive officer of Homes First Society, said.

By contrast, he estimated that it would cost about \$7,000 a year for the mortgage costs of a \$40,000 apartment unit.

Drina Joubert, 41, who froze to death in an abandoned truck in December, spent at least 376 nights in hostels during the last two years of her life.

Building more hostels, Mr. **Bosworth** said, is like "pouring money down a sink hole," adding that more funds should be spent on permanent housing.

However, he sparked the first heated exchange of the inquest by suggesting that money should be taken from well-established social agencies to build housing.

The problems of the homeless will not be solved by "taking money away from other essential services," said Tracey Tremayne-Lloyd, a lawyer representing the Addiction Research Foundation. She insisted that people like Ms Joubert, who suffered from personality disorders and alcoholism, need support services, not just housing.

Mr. **Bosworth** shot back: "I did not say the services weren't essential."

In an interview later, he said that "money is being wasted (on certain forms of social support) because permanent housing is not there."

Many discharged psychiatric patients and alcoholics have recurring problems because they lack a stable environment in which to recover, he added.

Other witnesses agreed. "They are going back (to psychiatric institutions) because of the conditions outside," said Pat Capponi, a community worker with Parkdale Activity and Recreation Centre, a drop-in centre for discharged psychiatric patients.

Miss Tremayne-Lloyd said in an interview: "What we don't want to do is skim money off social services; what we want is more money directed into houses."

Mr. **Bosworth** said he believes it is unrealistic to expect governments to allot more money to the homeless when they are trying to hold down their expenses.

Miss Capponi told the jury yesterday that many social agencies are involved in "turf wars" among themselves, and the interests of the homeless get sidetracked.

The Globe and Mail

Homelessness a growing trend

Thursday, July 17, 1986

JOHN SEWELL

A HOME FOR the homeless is an amazing balm. The security it gives leads to a feeling of self-worth, then a desire to make links to the outside world. If the housing has adequate permanency, most individuals blossom back into normal members of society.

Toronto Councillor Joanne Campbell talks about the positive change permanent housing makes in terms of a management challenge: "Once singles are stabilized they want to couple. So we (the Metro Non-Profit Singles Housing Corp.) have to look at a way of mixing different kinds of units."

Bill **Bosworth**, one of the inspirations behind Homes First, an organization building and managing housing for homeless singles, compares offering someone on the street a job and offering a place to live: "We can guarantee the housing will stay, will be permanent, but we can't do that for most jobs. So the housing must come first."

Solving the problem of homelessness seems pretty simple: we need a great deal of permanent housing the homeless can afford. We don't need more street workers, or more food banks or more hostels or more studies. We need more places to live that are affordable, such as rooming houses.

And that requires political leadership.

How did homelessness escalate into such a crisis? Some are on the street because of policies to de-institutionalize mental patients, but that number is not large: the mental instability of many homeless is a result of living without a home rather than its cause. Mr. **Bosworth** thinks many are the fallout from federal policies deliberately creating unemployment five or more years ago. "When the economy recovered," he says, "the people who were offered jobs were those just out of school, not those people already unemployed. So we've created a generation of people on the street."

Others point to new technology that has put people out of work without creating alternate jobs. Unemployed, without regular income, people run into trouble quite quickly. The recession earlier this decade also saw the demise of many smaller firms that relied on "marginal" employees, the kinds of people now on the street. As well, many of the jobs formerly held by such employees have been turned from full-time to part-time work. John Jagt, manager of Metro's hostel operations

notes: "The market tempo is set for two-income families. The quarter or one third of families with just one income are in real trouble." It's even worse with a part-time income.

Which gets to the more expansive explanations. Rudi Mumm, a brother with the Oblate of Mary Immaculate order, organizes roomers in Cabbagetown. Referring to the United States and the United Kingdom, he says: "Homelessness is a growing trend everywhere, as the number of people with lower income increases in size. That has to do with the distribution of wealth and technology."

Mr. **Bosworth** voices a similar conclusion: "Statistics Canada shows that the bottom 40 per cent of Canadians have only about 15 per cent of the income available. That 40 per cent has become an underclass. The people on the street are simply those at the very bottom of the bottom."

Set in these terms, the leadership necessary to deal with the problem of homelessness will have to reforge in our cities a social cohesion that apparently has fallen apart in both Britain and the United States. We will have to buck recent trends rewarding the wealthy and instead establish a sentiment that agrees on sharing available incomes and financial resources in a much more equitable fashion. Without that change, people at the bottom will never have the money to secure a permanent place to live.

Toronto is, in a precocious phase, overrun by young professionals swaddled in new-found income. The many voices arrayed against such a simple thing as making the property tax system more equitable can hardly be expected to argue for policies that distribute incomes more fairly.

That is the leadership problem.

Mr. Mumm: "We pick up the frustration the people we work with experience. We don't see any openings."

Mr. **Bosworth**: "It's pretty easy to get depressed."

The Globe and Mail

Cap on federal housing subsidies condemned

Tuesday, **December 20, 1988**

BY ANDRE PICARD

The Globe and Mail

An umbrella group representing housing activists has condemned a spending ceiling on housing subsidies imposed by the federal government that could lead to the cancellation of at least 19 low-cost housing projects in Ontario alone.

"In Ontario, where the Toronto housing crisis is forcing people into desperate situations, the federal government's move means 1,300 fewer rental units than were promised," William **Bosworth**, a spokesman for Election Agenda on Canadian Housing, said yesterday.

"Where is the Tory commitment to ending homelessness? During the election campaign, Brian Mulroney said 'one homeless person in Canada is too many,' " he said.

The Toronto Star - NEWS
Wednesday, **December 21, 1988** A6

McDermid won't meet with critics on housing

By David Israelson Toronto Star

Homeless and needy people won't be meeting tonight with federal Housing Minister John McDermid as they had hoped.

"We received word from the minister's office. He's not coming and he will not be sending anybody," said Bill **Bosworth**, who invited McDermid to the meeting.

It was scheduled for this evening - just four days before Christmas - because people who work with the homeless are concerned McDermid doesn't understand their plight.

It will take place anyway at 90 Shuter St., said **Bosworth**, who represents a nationwide coalition of eight varied social action groups called the Election Agenda for Canadian Housing.

"We were going to tell him (McDermid) what being homeless is like. But in the absence of the minister, we will be talking about what homeless people want."

McDermid's snub comes just a day after he was harshly condemned by **Bosworth's** coalition, which has been trying to meet with him since he was appointed in September.

NEIGHBORS

Lastman's flophouse views flip after tour

By Royson James
31 January 1989 The Toronto Star

In a dramatic about-face, Lastman is now asking North York Council to study locating some rooming houses in his city.

Just last year, Lastman waged an all-out war against rooming houses, calling them filthy places unfit for humans.

"It really impressed me," says Lastman of the rooming house on Huron St., which houses 10 tenants. It's run by Homes First Society.

"They are clean. Each room has a window, real nice. This is the Cadillac of rooming houses."

Lastman is asking the city's housing task force to use a \$50,000 grant from the provincial housing ministry to look at setting up North York rooming houses run by Homes First Society or similar agencies.

Saying he is still very concerned about rooming houses operating illegally in residential neighborhoods, Lastman vows to continue hunting down such homes and closing them.

A North York law bars more than three unrelated persons from living in a house.

Last summer, the city began a crackdown on rooming houses, using undercover city inspectors. Several charges have been laid.

Lastman says his recent tour of Toronto rooming houses showed him that, with restrictions, North York may be able to allow some.

Bill **Bosworth**, executive officer for Homes First Society, says his group did not hand-pick tenants for its Huron St. house.

"They came straight off the floors of the shelters in downtown Toronto," he says. "The problem with rooming houses is not the people who live in them but how it's managed."

Rooming houses operated by Homes First Society are managed by the agency and a board of community residents.

The agency has two other houses on Spadina Ave., with 11 and six tenants, respectively.

The tenants pay about 25 per cent of their income as rent, up to approximately \$400 a month per room, **Bosworth** says.