

Supply

around the throat is the deficit and the debt. I beg members to pay attention to that issue and not be narrow in their processes.

Mrs. Anna Terrana (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I come from Vancouver East which has some very poor areas. These people cannot afford a racing car. Neither can they afford a house or a place to live.

I understand there are about 8,000 people that do not have proper shelter. Some of these people live in shelters that in fact are like pig sties. I would like to add that we have probably the largest aboriginal population in my area.

We talked about dignity in our red book. There is no dignity without an address. It is true that we are in tough economic times. I understand that very well, but I feel that it is very important that we help those who need help.

We have talked about creativity and some very good programs that have been put in. I am glad about that. I think that creativity is what we have to concentrate on. What is being done by CMHC for instance with the aboriginal groups is in fact trying to get private capital and working together with governments.

We also talked about reallocation of resources. I think we have to concentrate on that. What the Liberal Party is trying to do now is go through a series of consultations, reviewing all of the social programs and I would invite everybody to participate. We are asking the people at large to participate, so parliamentarians in this House should be the first to participate. On that point, we can also establish where the priorities are.

It is very important that we look at the whole scene. I have different statistics than what the hon. member has just given. I have them here with me. If he wants to see them I am prepared to share them with him.

Mr. Hill (MacLeod): Mr. Speaker, there was not really a question in the comment, but I would like to say that the racing car that I mentioned was not my own. It was a rented car. Four of us shared it. I hope the member does not think I am talking from a different strata.

I noticed that last year there were 427 housing starts in British Columbia. That compares very favourably with what that I see from Quebec. We might well compare statistics.

I am not suggesting for one second that social housing is not important. I am suggesting that it be placed on a priority list and that is what I ask each member to do.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if, according to parliamentary procedure, I can say that the hon. member is dead wrong. You see, the people who have poor lodgings cost a lot of money to our society. Their health is bound to deteriorate, their children do not do as well in school as they

should be and, eventually, do not find the jobs they would otherwise have been able to get.

A society that does not care for the people living in poor conditions and those in need gets into debt, because it does not tap the human capital and the talent of those people. In fact, if we were to follow the suggestion made by the hon. member, not only would we be putting the rope around our neck, but we would also be pulling on it.

The Deputy Speaker: If my memory serves me right, there should not be any problem with the expression "dead wrong". The hon. member for Macleod has the floor.

• (1655)

[*English*]

Mr. Hill (MacLeod): Mr. Speaker, I understand the hon. member's passion about this particular issue but I would simply ask him and everyone else in the House what they would give up so that they could have more social housing. In the light of our financial circumstances in our country what would they give up? If they would push this priority higher, what would they take away?

I simply say come and explain to me what they would give up.

The Deputy Speaker: The time has expired for questions and comments.

Mr. McTeague: I have only a question for the hon. member, because like his colleague—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The time has expired for questions and comments.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Quebec): Mr. Speaker, the United Nations have declared 1994 the International Year of the Family. We must however admit that the families of Quebec and Canada are having a very hard time making ends meet.

In such a meaningful year, should a responsible government not be preparing a policy on social housing to assist the most needy among us in their quest for a reasonable and affordable home?

The needs in social housing are most strongly felt in urban areas. For example, in Limoilou and in the lower town, in my riding, there are at least 1,200 households on waiting lists for a place in low-cost housing projects and more than 600 households are waiting for co-operative housing.

Nearly half the persons living in downtown neighbourhoods, who represent 85 per cent of the total population, live below the poverty line. Given such a situation, we believe it is important that, through an urban planning policy, we preserve and revitalize the life of those neighbourhoods.