

Routine Proceedings

housing. Nonetheless, the lists of the homeless and those needing shelter continue to rise.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, this Government has not really cut all the funds earmarked for housing. The lists of the homeless continue to grow. The Government still continues to ignore that fact.

[*English*]

There are over 1.2 million people in the country who have to devote more than 30 per cent of their revenue to lodging. That is simply unacceptable in a country as rich and prosperous as this one. The government has cut the programs for renovation, which has severely cut a number of the lowest income people in the country away from the possibility of having any kind of decent housing in which to live.

We are living through a crisis. The government is simply not responding. Yet, municipality after municipality, provincial government after provincial government across the country, cry out for national leadership and they are not getting it. Mayor Eggleton has called for a national conference on homelessness. There has been no decent response from the government. Indeed, the initiatives being taken by Mayor Eggleton are ones that should be taken by this minister and the government.

Some 20 per cent of the children of the country live in poverty. The root cause of poverty is homelessness. I ask you, Madam Speaker: what kind of a government would talk about co-operation with the private sector and non-profit organizations and yet would continue, time after time, to withdraw the funds that previous government have made available?

Leadership is more than a question of simple rhetoric and inane announcements. Leadership is action. We have seen none of it. When is the government going to begin to put money into subsidized housing, non-profit housing, and co-operative housing? When is the government going to face up to its responsibilities?

When are the government and this minister going to stop crowing about the fact that it has contributed \$340 million back into the Consolidated Revenue Fund, while hundreds of thousands of Canadians are homeless? There are 250,000 homeless Canadians, 80,000 homeless children in the country, and the only major announce-

ment the government can make is that in the last five years it has given back \$340 million of the money that ought to have been allocated to housing to the Consolidated Revenue Fund to make corporate grants. This is simply unacceptable.

Homelessness is the root cause of poverty. We all know that. The government has an opportunity to take a leadership role. We see an interim ministry in a caretaker government, and it is really more in sorrow than in anger that I stand here. I applaud this announcement by the minister. It is unfortunately the crumbs of an overfilled table. Canadian people have the right to expect more.

• (1540)

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Madam Speaker, I have been in the House now for about 18 months, the same length of time the hon. minister has been Minister of State for Housing. I have watched a crisis in affordable housing develop into a chronic problem that now affects at least 30 per cent to 40 per cent of Canadians who are living poverty. They are either being driven into poverty by the high cost of housing, or because of poverty they are unable to afford adequate housing.

This was a recycled announcement. All three of these announcements have been made by the minister before. In this time of environmental consciousness it is nice to recycle things, but I really think that the Canadian public and those in difficulty in housing need more than simply recycled press announcements.

All of those announcements are totally hollow. The government has not announced anything that any other large developer in this country would be forced to do. In Toronto, they would be forced by provincial legislation to provide 25 per cent affordable housing, which is what they are going to provide. Their definition of affordable housing is \$175,000 a unit. That is not affordable to the vast majority of Canadians.

In Vancouver it is the same thing. They are going to sell off part of their land in order to redevelop, increasing the density. They must get the permission of the residents, the neighbourhood and city council, the same as any other developer would have to do in Vancouver. They are doing nothing more than what is having to be done by Li Ka-shing on the Expo lands.