

Supply

I look in particular to the situation in British Columbia. The Social Credit Government of British Columbia continues to be tenth and last with regard to spending for social housing. That Government in British Columbia has shown that it has no intention of embracing a mandate of providing social housing due to its preoccupation with turning everything over to the private sector. Yet, without a full public discussion, the Minister has washed his hands of a national housing strategy which would guarantee every Canadian the right to a decent level of housing.

In fact, the core need threshold varies throughout Newfoundland. For example, in one area of Newfoundland the core need threshold for cut-off is \$16,000. In another area it is \$20,000. The cut-off point on the Avalon Peninsula is much lower than that in St. John's.

In Charlottetown the cut-off point for any federal application for RRAP funding is \$17,000. It is \$16,000 in the areas of Prince, Queens and Kings. The same figure applies in Halifax. The cut-off point in the City of Halifax for eligibility for housing funds is \$21,000. In Sydney, Nova Scotia, the cut-off point is \$16,000 and in Annapolis it is \$17,000. Any family of three or four persons earning more than \$17,000 is no longer eligible for assistance under the RRAP program because of the Government's new definition of "core need".

In Saint John, New Brunswick, the cut-off point is \$16,000. In the City of Montreal the cut-off point for a family of three or four is \$17,500 and for a family of five it is \$19,000. If single parents raising four children earn more than \$19,000 they are no longer eligible for help under the Government's RRAP program.

The Minister laughed earlier when I used the City of Hamilton as an example. Yet, his own CMHC statistics indicate that in the City of London the core cut-off point is \$17,500. In Brantford it is \$16,000 for a family of three or four.

Unfortunately, the Minister chose to ignore interventions at the CAHRO meeting of one of the representatives of the City of Winnipeg who was working on the inner core program for that city. The Minister would not even talk to the Minister. He ignored him. He cannot even get a meeting with the Ministry to discuss the deterioration of the situation in the City of Winnipeg as it relates to eligibility for residential housing programs. The cut-off point in the City of Winnipeg is \$19,000.

In the City of Saskatoon a family of three or four which earns more than \$18,000 is no longer eligible for any assistance through the RRAP program. In Calgary the figure is \$20,500. In Edmonton the figure is \$19,000. In Lethbridge, it is \$18,500, and in Medicine Hat it is \$16,000. In the City of Vancouver the cut-off point is \$23,000. In Abbotsford and Chilliwack the cut-off point is \$16,000. The cut-off point for families of three or four in White Horse, Yukon, is \$18,500.

The Minister shakes his head, but he will know that this new definition of "core need" is in fact inflicting untold hardship

on thousands of Canadian families who own their own homes and want a chance to fix them up but are living within the definition of what we call the "working poor" Canadians. These people are living below the poverty line by any Government definition. I did not want to use the Senate definition because I was fearful that the Government would accuse me of using a figure produced by the Liberal-dominated Senate. Therefore, I chose the National Council of Welfare figure with the intent of asking every Member of the House whether it is not only just and fair that all people living below the poverty line should be considered eligible for RRAP funding.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, the Minister laughed in the House when I mentioned the fact that a family of three or four, in Montreal for example, earning—

[English]

Mr. McKnight: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I was not laughing at the content of the Hon. Member's speech. I was laughing at the inaccuracy and the silly rhetoric. The Member has mixed up programs and does not understand the program. I am sure that if the Hon. Member had had her notes early enough to commence this debate when it was scheduled, she may have spent enough time to become cognizant of what the new social programs are.

Ms. Copps: In other words, Mr. Speaker, the Minister was not laughing at my speech but was laughing at me. As far as I am concerned both are totally unacceptable. The Minister talks about consultation. The Minister was supposed to have a private meeting today with Members of the National Co-operative Foundation. He phoned them to say that he could not meet with them because we were having a housing debate. He neglected to say that the housing debate will take place until one o'clock this afternoon and then will resume from two o'clock until five o'clock this afternoon. This is the first time that we have had an all-day debate on a housing issue. The Ministry tries to blame the Opposition's calling of this debate for the fact that he had to cancel his meeting. I wish he had the guts to tell the National Co-operative Foundation that they could meet with him in the lobby. I am sure that the Member of Parliament representing the New Democratic Party on housing issues would be equally as generous as I in allowing the Minister to carry on his meeting. Due to the Minister's broken commitment to the co-operative group, I fully expect that he will be present here today until late this afternoon.

Mr. McKnight: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to inform the Hon. Member and the House that I will be leaving at one o'clock to meet representatives of the Co-operative Housing Foundation as their guest at lunch. In the meantime, I hope to be able to work in a meeting. The Hon. Member should be sure of facts before she puts them forward to the House.