

*Supply*

**Mr. Patry:** Your comment is 99 per cent accurate since the RRAP program is of course for homeowners, but that does not mean we cannot care about them. There are a lot of homeowners, and I know they are some in the Montreal area and in the province of Quebec, who are overtaxed like the rest of us and have trouble making ends meet. I understand very well the concerns the hon. member has about new programs, because we must think about new programs.

I decided to go into politics mostly because of social considerations and I can assure the hon. member that I will support any new social program. All I can say for now is that the government has estimated, through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, that it will be able to save about \$120 million which should go, I am told, to new programs. To some extent, new programs similar to those we have for homeowners will have to be set up for new housing.

[English]

**Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member on his comments. I would also like to point out a couple of things before coming to a question.

I would like to apprise members of a report that was done by the committee on aboriginal affairs on aboriginal and northern housing. Members might want to read and reflect upon the poor state of housing for aboriginal people across the country.

As much as my colleagues from the Reform would probably like us to go back into teepees and igloos because of the poor state of housing, I want to comment that home repairs for rural and low income areas are welcome. However this does not adequately address the northern and aboriginal communities.

• (1735)

Some of those houses that are built in the aboriginal and northern communities almost do not meet the basic standards. It is not necessarily the best idea to repair the homes. It is better to replace them.

When the government fell on October 25 and social housing was cut, Northwest Territories was getting something in the neighbourhood of \$47 million for social housing. That cut had a devastating effect on aboriginal and northern housing because although \$47 million may not seem all that much, when the total population is 55,000 in Northwest Territories and we are already short by 3,800 units, \$47 million means an awful lot.

I know the hon. member supports the resumption of the funding for social housing but more from my point of view we need the \$47 million for the Northwest Territories social housing program. As I said, if we do not get the housing our

alternative is to build igloos in the winter and tents in the summer. I do not think that is acceptable today.

[Translation]

**Mr. Patry:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question. I will simply tell him that I agree with him and that this government is very much aware of the huge housing needs of native people, on and off the reserves.

In 1993-94, the federal government will spend some \$5.4 billion on native-oriented programs and we will try to do as much as possible because this is very important.

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve):** Mr. Speaker, I thank you for leading us during this debate. You have been patient. I am sorry I broke the rules so often, and I promise I will be more disciplined next time I take part in a debate.

I feel the need to recall, for the benefit of listeners who are joining us just now, that on this allotted day the official Opposition insisted on moving:

That this House condemn the government's inability to re-establish and increase budgets for social housing construction programs.

I thank our critic, the hon. member for Laurentides. You will understand that each and every word in this motion is meaningful. We decided to address the issue of social housing because we feel there is a subtle but nevertheless unquestionable correlation between social housing and poverty.

The definition of poverty rests in part on statistics. In our society people are poor if they have to devote more than 56.2 per cent of their income to their essential needs such as clothing, housing and food.

We are having this debate at a time when large parts of Canadian as well as Quebec society have never been so poor.

For our part, we are firmly convinced, and this will be a focus of commitment for the Official Opposition, that there are ways to put an end to that poverty. I must add that the speakers on the government side have addressed social housing somewhat in isolation, as if this were not related to the issue of poverty. Poverty puts on a new face. Being poor in 1994 is not the same as being poor in the 1980s. Deep changes have occurred since then. In 1994, we do not speak of poverty like the Senate did in the 1970s when it was mandated to study poverty in Canada. Poverty strikes the young and people of my age, in their early thirties.

• (1740)

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Ménard:** And not only people of my age, but also women and heads of single-parent families. Fortunately, there are less and less senior citizens living in poverty.