

### Supply

The results are there to attest to the Government's leadership. Since 1986 when the new federal-provincial agreements and the new social programs were implemented, the Government has practically doubled the rate at which traditional forms of social housing provide assistance to Canadians to meet their core housing needs. This means that almost twice as many needy households are now being provided with new units, twice as many households assisted for the same total expenditure. If this cannot be qualified as effectiveness, I really do not know how else to describe this unprecedented success.

We are talking here about single-parent families, elderly people living in very poor housing conditions, families who have to spend large sums of money on housing out of proportion to their incomes in order to provide their children with suitable housing conditions. These are the people our programs have addressed.

The Government, which some try to blame for not providing leadership, has succeeded to such an extent that the previous Government would be envious of it. It is not on this Government that the blame must be put but rather on previous Governments for having waited so long to offer assistance to those most in need.

The Government is accused of having delegated its powers, of having abandoned its responsibilities, of having lost control of the national housing file. This is simply not true. The Government has not abandoned its responsibilities. On the contrary, it has acted in a responsible fashion and has entered into a dialogue with the provinces, a dialogue which is producing positive results.

For over two years now, the federal and provincial Governments have worked together to solve housing problems jointly. Rather than limiting its influence to federal expenditures, the Government now also has the opportunity to impact provincial expenditures. Not only has the Government been successful in influencing how the provinces spend their funds, it has also succeeded in convincing the provinces to substantially increase the amounts of funding to assist the homeless.

We know that there is still work to be done. Many voices are crying out for assistance from all levels of Government. The challenge is not small and the energy invested by the Government attests to its concern to act to provide assistance as rapidly as possible to the greatest number possible, but dedicating those funds and those actions to those who are most in need.

I see that my time is running short. The Government is receiving feedback from the people of Canada in order to make sure that the policies meet the needs of the people. The Government's leadership may be shown in many ways, but the most eloquent way is certainly that this leadership is based on national consensus. This is precisely what the Government has been successful in doing for almost three years now.

Every year the Government spends a considerable amount of money to alleviate the housing problems of Canadians. Each year over 50,000 additional families benefit from various forms of assistance offered to people in need. These amounts do not take into account the more than \$1.5 billion already earmarked each year to reduce rents to an affordable level for families. Facts speak for themselves. They show a commitment to social justice and development for all Canadians. The housing policy of the Government has been well designed and is now yielding benefits.

My hon. colleague opposite who introduced the motion today said in closing her remarks: "Wait until the day after the next election for the Liberal Government to pick up the pieces of the previous Government's housing policy". The day after the next election, this Government will be here on this side of the House, and it will continue its housing policy. On that day, we will find fewer people in need because of the actions of this Government today.

**Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to participate in this debate because it concerns a very fundamental aspect of the Canadian economy, the need for housing. I wish to compliment my colleague for introducing this motion today. It gives us a clear opportunity to debate some of the substantive aspects of the housing policy or the lack of housing policy in Canada.

One aspect of the issue which has caught my interest and the interest of my constituents as well as the interest of many Canadians is the lack of support the Government has provided to the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program. The previous speaker said that there are a number of Canadians who have innovative ideas with regard to housing policy.

• (1730)

The Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, for the benefit of Members opposite, was a program introduced by the Government of Canada in 1973 under a Liberal Government. One would have to concede that it was followed up by the Clark Government for a short period of time. We would have hoped that it would not only have been followed up on beyond 1984, but indeed expanded upon between 1984 and 1988. The exact opposite has occurred.

The Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program was started by the federal Government to encourage the upgrading of substandard dwellings, especially those occupied by low to moderate income earners—I wish to emphasize low to moderate income earners—in order to improve and maintain the existing housing stock. Eligible home owners and landlords were entitled to receive partly forgivable loans for admissible renovation costs.

Look at the market for this particular program. Does it assist home owners in the urban centres of this country who make in excess of \$100,000 or \$150,000? Is it a program which assists Canadians who make in excess of \$50,000 or