

*Routine Proceedings*

[Translation]

This consultation process will bring out a whole range of opinions and viewpoints and will help ensure that the public housing program continues to meet the needs of low-income people.

• (1110)

[English]

The publication of this report is a further example of the federal government's commitment to providing effective management of our resources and ensuring that Canadians are well housed.

We are working to meet the challenges not only of today but that of the 1990s and beyond. Out of this process, I hope that not only will we be able to improve the public housing that we now have, but perhaps, and hopefully, we will be able to utilize these resources to increase the total stock of housing perhaps in some co-operative and joint ventures with the private sector.

I am looking forward to great things from this consultation process. I am sure that all Canadians are as well.

**Mr. Joe Fontana (London East):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his statement, but it is becoming quite clear and, frankly, quite boring to listen to this minister make all kinds of flowery pronouncements about housing with absolutely no substance, answers or action.

It is clear that when a government lacks initiative, interest, commitment and vision, it calls for more surveys, studies and evaluation. In short, it wants to consult more. What this country really needs are answers, not more questions.

While an evaluation of this kind is valuable because it examines the concerns and the opinions of the people who use the public housing programs, it is always necessary for the government to listen to feedback from the very people the government is trying to help. An evaluation of the quality of the housing stock is also necessary to know if the program is meeting the needs of Canadians by providing adequate shelter.

What this evaluation lacks, however, is an evaluation of the adequacy of the public housing program itself. For the past year, Canadians have been inundated with

information about the spiralling costs of housing and rents and the appalling lack of affordable housing.

Provincial and municipal governments, public housing authorities, non-profit and co-operative groups, the private sector, not to mention the thousands of Canadians in waiting lines, want action, not more studies.

We have heard the minister's sob stories before about how the finance department and the finance minister have cut his budget and the housing programs. The end result is that we are getting less action on housing today, not more.

What has the government's action been thus far? The elimination of the RRAP program, that very program which assisted our aging stock of housing; less social housing units; less co-operative housing units; a cap on the multiple unit construction prices; and, finally, higher interest rates which will be the death-knell to housing construction totally.

When is this minister and his government going to get off their duffs and stop talking about the housing problems and start acting to solve these problems? Why will the minister not convene a national housing action conference involving all sectors and all governments to deal with this crisis in housing? How can we all work together to solve and meet the challenges of housing for our people today and tomorrow?

**Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North):** Mr. Speaker, I find myself almost becoming embarrassed for the Minister of Housing. Canada has a growing crisis in affordable housing and the minister is giving hollow, inane platitudes of self-congratulation about what this government has done.

He talks with pride about the development of 205,000 social housing units in nearly 40 years. That amounts to 5,000 units a year. He does not even have the nerve to talk about what has happened since 1985 when this government abandoned its commitment to social housing.

Most industrial countries have 25 per cent of their housing stock in non-market housing. Canada has 4 per cent. Even Hong Kong has 40 per cent. He brags about a family income of \$11,000. He brags that this is the family income of people in public housing. He should be ashamed.