

### *Supply*

I want to focus my comments in the time that I have this evening on discussing how the budget and its attention to housing will have and has a profound effect on women.

The impact of the federal budget on women is not a direct blow aimed specifically at this segment of the population. It is an insidious one that affects numerous programs that many Canadian women depend on.

Federal budget cuts to housing programs are a perfect example of this. Many Canadians who depend on federal transfer payments to the provinces for social housing programs are single parent families, the vast majority of whom are headed by women.

These cuts also affect single seniors, many of whom are women struggling for self-sufficiency and independence as they age.

In the last budget this government cut spending for social housing. These cuts will result in more than a 51 per cent reduction in the development of new units in the next three years.

Currently only 6 per cent of Canadians receive assistance through social housing budgets. But there are still 15 per cent of Canadians, over one million people, in need of adequate and affordable shelter.

These cuts will mean that fewer Canadians will receive assistance through the Rent Supplement Program or the Non-Profit Housing Program. Fewer natives will receive assistance through the Urban Native Program or Rural and Native Housing Program. All these programs help women throughout Canada.

Women who live in the have not provinces are even more dependent on federal transfer payments because provincial inputs were minuscule to begin with and they decline as federal inputs decline.

A study conducted by CMHC in the 1980s concluded that there have been few improvements in finding affordable housing for single parent families led by women. The study said:

Low economic status, discrimination in the job market and the responsibilities of child rearing as primarily female problems continue to affect affordable, adequate housing for these Canadian families.

Single parent families headed by women continue to face discrimination when it comes to finding affordable shelter. This problem is compounded by the drop in income this group is continually subject to.

According to the most recent Statistics Canada figures, families in which a woman is the sole parent experienced a drop in average income down to \$22,000 a year. Six out of ten single parent families headed by women live in poverty, up from a year ago when five out of ten lived in poverty.

These statistics are a testament to the needs of these women and their children. These are the Canadians on waiting lists for non-profit housing, for rent supplement programs or for co-operative housing units which this government killed in the 1992 budget. Co-op housing is not a viable option for women and others because this program has been gutted by this government.

CMHC has estimated that the recent budget cuts will translate into 7,650 fewer new units of social housing in Canada this year alone. These budget cuts will mean that the vast majority of these single parent families will continue to live in poverty.

There was one CMHC housing program which had 60 per cent of all of its projects with targeting to single parent families. The Co-Operative Housing Program offered stability of tenure and guaranteed affordability. It provided tenants with the opportunity to live in a community of mixed incomes. It did not offer public housing which is essentially ghetto housing.

• (1650)

The Co-Operative Housing Program does not just provide shelter to these women. It provides strong community support. It is a cost efficient program with numerous benefits. It was eliminated in this government's recent budget, as I mentioned before.

Canada's first Co-Operative Housing Program was introduced in 1973 under a Liberal government. In 1986 this government was so impressed with the success of the program that it promised to produce 5,000 units of co-op housing a year, but this goal was never achieved. Instead, under this government the number of co-op units constructed has declined and funding for the program has been in jeopardy for the last two years.