

am looking for assistance from my eastern colleagues. Do they know what sweat equity means? It means that people earned a bit of money, did some repairs to their houses, and would indeed stay in their own homes. That was a program which the federal Liberal Government at the time put together in Cape Breton in 1976-77 called the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program. We gave money to Canadians to restore their dwellings to a healthy state and to maintain them for at least 15 years.

• (1610)

Does the Member know that if the Government had continued that program people would still be in their houses? Does she know that Canadians today are leaving their homes and going to senior citizens' homes because they cannot afford to stay in their houses? Does she know that the RRAP program has not increased by one single cent since the Tory Government took over?

Not one penny has been added to the RRAP program. It took money from the RRAP program and put it in the social housing program. It did not put a new co-op program or a new RRAP program in place. It has done nothing for housing in Canada for the last three and a half years. Is the Member aware of that?

Mr. Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. With due respect to the comments of the Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier), I said in my opening remarks that I agree with the Member for Saint-Michel—Ahuntsic (Mrs. Killens) who said that we have to do something. The Conservative Party has been sensitive in my constituency and it will continue to be sensitive to the people. We have to find money which the Liberals spent—

Mr. Gauthier: That is not a point of order, that's argument.

[Translation]

Mrs. Killens: Mr. Speaker, this is a very interesting day. I would like to tell my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) that he is completely right, it is the RRAP program. I agree with him. I know that I do not have much time to answer this question, but when he listed the \$23.9 billion in extra taxes, I must tell you that were our colleague from Laval-des-Rapides (Mr. Garneau) here, he could give you the information. We gave you some. It will be in *Hansard* for you to review it and you will see that the Government should have brought down its deficit quite a bit more if it had been properly administered, because with all the \$23.9 billion in extra taxes, we should have a considerably smaller deficit than we do now.

[English]

Hon. Stewart McInnes (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I very much enjoyed listening to my hon. friend who is the housing critic for the Liberal Party. However, I do take

Supply

issue with some of the facts upon which she based her motion and a good deal of her representation.

The first part of her motion indicates that there are 100,000 homeless people, including women and children, and that the number is growing. Does my friend have any statistics available to support such a figure? My information is that on January 28, 1987, the Canadian Council on Social Development did a survey across Canada and determined that the number of homeless on that particular night, one of the coldest nights of the year, was 8,000. The figure may be 10,000 or it may be 7,000. It is not precise. We must, however, put the debate in context, and I do take grave issue with the statistic cited by my friend in her motion that we are dealing with 100,000 people.

The motion before us contains a number of particulars, but the thrust of it is that the Government has failed to exercise leadership in espousing housing policies for Canadians which have been beneficial rather than detrimental.

The Canadian Home Builders Association has been in Ottawa for five days. Representatives have met with myself, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the last speaker, and members of the NDP to discuss the state of the union with respect to housing. Coincidentally, I have just received a letter from Mr. Gary Santini, the President of the Canadian Homebuilders Association, dated May 18, 1988. The letter addresses the issues involved in this debate. I will read the letter in part and am quite prepared to table it. After discussing the various meetings with all concerned, he said:

We came away with a renewed sense of the Government's dedication to the needs of the housing sector, both private and non-profit.

I do not exaggerate when I say that considerable progress has been made under your leadership in the development of a comprehensive approach to housing policy in Canada. As an industry, we are acutely aware of the commitments you have made to our industry's development, particularly in the areas of training and education, technical research, regulatory reform and market analysis. Your overall policies and directions are well balanced and frankly, we are delighted to see the way you have been able to target resources to housing the truly needy.

Overall, it's a job well done; keep it going; and we look forward to working even more closely with you in the future.

That is the latest analysis of what the Government has been able to accomplish and is intending to put on the menu with respect to housing policies for Canada in the next few months.

The issue is about leadership. My proponent suggests, with a great deal of rhetoric, and in good faith, that there is a need for more and better housing to deal with a number of problems in Canada. We agree with this. That is why the Government has made it an axiom of its policies that housing is one of the most fundamental rights and needs in Canada. That is why I am proud to cite certain information and statistics which indicate that we have indeed been very successful in bringing about dramatic improvements in housing for all Canadians in all parts of Canada.

To put the debate in its proper context, I must call the attention of this House to the fact that when we got into office