

Supply

Mr. McKnight:—as the Hon. Member and I agree, a very good program.

Mr. Heap: It was completely different.

Mr. McKnight: The Hon. Member does not want me to finish answering. I recognize that it is completely different, but I also recognize that it is a new program in Canada. We must have some parameters to ensure that Canadian taxpayers are not put to the same costs that they were under AHOP. I am confident that with the commitment of the co-op foundation and the corporation we will be able to make this program work. If we can make this program work it will be available to all in Canada who wish to own or build rental accommodation.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, in entering into this debate I beg the indulgence of the House to provide a personal note. Before entering the federal House in 1979 I served for 10 years as the director of an organization called the Institute of Urban Studies which was a university-based urban development centre primarily concerned with issues of inter-city housing, neighbourhood development, and the general shape and environment of the urban scene which we could create.

One very important lesson I learned during that ten-year period was that housing is not purely a function of economics. Nothing is more important in the shaping of attitudes, feelings and a sense of community than the physical environment which one inhabits. The house, community and neighbourhood has an incredible impact on child rearing, stability and neighbourhood cohesion. All the values which we respect have a lot to do with the nature of the community which we build. We should not base our public policies purely on measurements of chartered accountants or the Nielsen-type standards which affect everything according to the harshest and most severe requirements of meeting some kind of cost accountability.

The debate we are having today has the same overtones with regard to housing as had the debate we had almost a year ago on the universality of senior citizens' pensions. It is not purely and simply a question of supplying a targeted need. That is a code word used by Conservatives to say "a means test". They are saying that there is a cut-off based only upon Government assistance to those at the lowest level of income.

Another bit of wisdom I acquired working in the urban area is that one of the most effective initiatives a Government could take would be to ensure that there was a proper social mix of housing, that people were not ghettoized, that there was not, through public policy, a tendency to have one class of people earning one income living in one area.

The best thing we could do for families and children would be to ensure that the housing project, neighbourhood, or community would have a wide variety of individuals within it to ensure that people had different experiences. There should not be a concentration of one group of people. The mistakes made in the public housing projects of the 1950s and early

1960s were a clear example of that. Beginning in the late 1960s the federal housing policy moved away from the idea of strict narrow targeting concentrating one group of people in one kind of project. It was recognized in every industrial country that that form of public housing attempt had serious social overtones.

We are now repeating the mistakes of the 1950s. We are once again talking about targeting, which is a polite way of saying that we are going to destroy that social mix, that we are going to eliminate that opportunity to provide modest income Canadians the opportunity to live with some degree of neighbourhood cohesion. That is the basic objection which one must have to new housing policies. They are not social housing policies in the true sense of the word. We so often hear expressed the narrow-minded attitude that Government support should go only to those who can meet some very low means test. This country has been fighting that concept for 30 or 40 years. Once again we have a Government with that kind of mentality.

I would like to point out to the Members of the House an article written in *Policy Options* by Professor David Holchan-ski of the School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia who also acts as a consultant for CMHC. He said that the problem with the approach of the Government is that it is repeating the same mistakes that Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan made with their housing policies, and that we are going to end up with the same consequences. We will now have to face the same kinds of problems as they created through their housing policies.

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Having said that, I want to talk about a problem we face in the City of Winnipeg where it is perhaps most dramatically emphasized. I will talk just for a moment about the Residential Repair Assistance Program. That is one of the most important urban initiatives ever taken by the federal Government. Over the years it succeeded in helping thousands of Canadians to repair and upgrade their housing. It helped rescue those communities on the verge of destruction. The particular genius of the program is that it applied to inner city neighbourhoods and downtown areas but was not limited strictly to economic factors or income requirements. It was available to a variety of Canadians to upgrade a single family home or an apartment block. It brought incredible stability to many of those communities. In the core area project in Winnipeg, which has been one of the most successful urban development projects by far, the RRAP program was essential. The latest figures show that over 1,200 units were upgraded with the assistance of RRAP over the last four years. Yet the programs introduced by that Minister will achieve the total destruction of RRAP.

Let me give you one example from one neighbourhood in my constituency, the Lord Roberts community. It is a community of apartment blocks and working class houses. It is a good community but it has to fight against the encroachment of