

apart from his cabinet colleagues because that is what is expected of him.

Too often we are told that the Minister of Finance will decide. I say no. We must be able to count on the Minister of Public Works to act as an aggressive and uncompromising champion of social housing. Only when the minister, acting as the voice of the less privileged in terms of social housing, puts his foot down will the Minister of Finance act accordingly in his budget.

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve for his excellent and brilliant presentation:

Given the federal deficit which has now accumulated and exceeds \$500 billion, do you agree that this House should substantially increase the funding of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation or other related agencies in order to provide more low-income housing?

**Mr. Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, as René Lévesque said, facts are always more stubborn than the interpretation one gives them. I believe so, since the question was put that way; I think it would be good for the government to put more money into low-income housing. Other possibilities exist, which I did not have time to mention because I ran out of time.

In Montreal, there are four purchasing corporations. What are purchasing corporations? Perhaps the minister should come to Montreal and see. These purchasing corporations bring people together in a non-profit organization. They have some money—of course, they have help. They have been helped by the McGill Fund or by the people who probably haunted your childhood, the good Sisters of the Holy Cross. With this initial funding, they can take housing out of the speculative market, renovate it and then make it available to the community.

I believe that this is a promising approach for the future. I understand that the hon. member also wants to be this government's social conscience. Since he is a Montrealer, which pleases me, I think that we should convince the minister to come to Montreal and try out this approach and use it as a way for society to act in the market.

[English]

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona):** Mr. Speaker, I want to make a brief comment and perhaps ask the member a question.

First I want to make it absolutely clear that the New Democratic Party supports the notion that more rather than less needs to be spent on social housing, not just in Quebec but across the country. It is something we have always supported. In the past we have pressed previous governments to make a greater

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commitment to social housing and were disturbed by the cuts in social housing made by the previous Conservative government.

I listened earlier to a Reform member of Parliament who asked a question of the Bloc Québécois member about what they would be prepared to give up and what would they be prepared to not spend money on in return for spending more money on social housing.

I do not want to presume to answer the question for the hon. member, however it seems to me that if we were looking for more money for social housing and for other social priorities one thing we could look at is the tax system.

I am reading an extensive article by Neil Brooks called "The Changing Structure of the Canadian Tax System, Accommodating the Rich". It is a very lengthy article in the *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* in the spring of 1992 and outlines the way in which the tax system has been changed over the last 10 years to accommodate the rich.

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One of the ways we could find that kind of money for social housing and for other things is to look at changing the tax system. One of the things that has been floated around in the last little while is trying to bring down the amount of money that people are able to put away to avoid taxation on through the use of RRSPs. I wonder what the position of the Bloc is on that.

It would seem to me that people who have \$13,000 left over to put into RRSPs and therefore avoid paying taxes on it are not the people who need social housing. Obviously a big gap exists between the people who benefit from this particular tax policy and the people who are in need of social housing.

It certainly would seem to me that some amelioration or a reduction of the amount that people are able to hide in this way might help to provide money on the other side for social purposes.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** If the hon. member wishes to answer, he still has about four or five minutes left.

**Mr. Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, you are very generous.

In his question, the hon. member suggested an answer with which I wholeheartedly agree. I think our leader and my colleagues from the Bloc Québécois made it very clear, from the very beginning, that social justice, which is a main goal of ours, flows from tax reform, but not just any tax reform, and not necessarily one which will affect ordinary Canadians and low-income taxpayers. On a corporate level, we know about the tax avoidance devices available in Canada and also all the measures used by richer taxpayers.