

### Oral Questions

Treasury Board as the minister responsible for the Public Service or at least in respect of his capacity as spokesman for the government's bilingualism program. Would the minister tell the House whether the merit system will continue to operate in the government's plan to further increase the number of unilingual French positions in the public service replacing bilingual positions as published in yesterday's press?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board): The answer is yes, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

Mr. Alkenbrack: I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister tell the House how the merit system can continue to prevail under the program as announced yesterday?

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: I did not announce any program yesterday, Mr. Speaker. Legislation on this matter was passed by Parliament a few years ago. A resolution has been concurred in by the House in 1973, to the effect that there would henceforth be in the Public Service bilingual positions, positions where English would be essential, positions where French would be essential, and positions where both English and French would be required. It is within this policy adopted by the House that this program will be implemented.

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[English]

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

#### GUIDELINES FOR MINISTERS ON ACCEPTANCE OF FREE TRANSPORTATION—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister I should like to direct my question to the Acting Prime Minister. Would he indicate if any guidelines have been set for cabinet ministers and their families as to when they may or may not accept directly or indirectly free transportation or other accommodation from those in the private sector and if so would he table the guidelines. If not, will such guidelines be set and tabled?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of such guidelines. I am sure the cabinet ministers, all my colleagues, observe principles of good sense and avoid becoming in any way indebted to anyone else.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary again directed to the Acting Prime Minister. In view of his earlier question and in view of the fact that El Al, Israel's state airline, has two seats available on its regular flight from Israel to Montreal on Monday, would the Acting Prime Minister cause the Minister of National Health and Welfare to be informed that it would be preferable for the minister and his wife to use those seats rather than return on the Bronfman jet as he has so brashly stated he intends to do.

[Mr. Alkenbrack.]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar.

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### CENTRAL MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

#### SUGGESTED UPWARD ADJUSTMENT OF LOAN CEILINGS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question, if I may, to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. In view of the incredible rise in building costs now being experienced in Canada, and the particularly severe restraints being placed upon the provision for and construction of hospitals, nursing homes and low rental housing, would the minister agree to instruct Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation to upwardly adjust its loan ceilings in order to meet this particular pricing problem with very little expense to the Canadian taxpayer.

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I should like to assure the hon. member that the loan ceilings are constantly under review in view of the fluctuating situation and variations in different parts of the country, and I think we should bear in mind that the ceilings tend to become minimums. By setting realistic ceilings we have seen programs which have been extremely successful. The minimum price for a house in certain areas has come down to meet the ceilings we have set.

• (1500)

Some hon. Members: Where?

Mr. Danson: So long as members ask where, I would ask them to just look at the advertisements in the Toronto Daily Star which appeared on the same day as the announcement which the hon. member for Broadview made that houses were not available at or below the ceiling in Toronto.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gilbert: I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. Last Friday I invited the minister to take me around metropolitan Toronto and show me any homes that were priced at less than \$45,000. He did not take up the invitation. I checked the newspapers on the weekend and I found only one builder who was advertising homes at less than \$45,000. He advertised them for \$39,000 and up. I would again ask the minister to show me those homes in the Toronto area that sell for less than \$45,000.

An hon. Member: Perhaps a small condominium.

Mr. Danson: I rise on the same question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. I think the hon. member has put his question of privilege to place allegations on the record which I think should not be allowed to stand, as was the case with the previous reports. I have sent the hon. member a newspaper advertisement showing condominium housing and row housing. If the hon. member is going to delude voters in