

Adjournment Debate

suggest that on a national basis a program exists which can be directed directly to the low income Canadian under the home improvement loans plan, whereby homeowners can apply for loans of up to \$4,000 for home improvements.

I suggest to the minister that, rather than having to go through the provinces and the municipalities, the home improvement program be extended to Canadians under the following conditions. First, that homeowners be given the opportunity to apply for home improvement loans directly to CMHC under present conditions. Second, that the present program be amended to raise the amount to \$5,000. Third, that in addition the program be amended to provide the forgiveness factor under present conditions of rehabilitation, commensurate with the national code. Fourth, that the staff at CMHC offices across Canada be enlarged to take care of the added workload, and that the present capability be decentralized to take in the provision of service to rural populations.

It is obvious that the minister is having some difficulty in providing relief to low income Canadians who require decent and acceptable accommodation, and I offer that with such a thrust thousands of Canadians would be afforded the opportunity to continue to live in decent and upgraded accommodation and shelter in the locality they wish, thereby relieving the housing crisis which exists in Canada today. I would appreciate a sympathetic response from the minister, and I know I can expect some sympathetic consideration.

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Madam Speaker, I have been impressed by the continued interest of the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall) in the NIP and RRAP programs. I was particularly interested in his reference to the home improvement loans program and the specific suggestions that he made, suggestions which I can assure him I will take into consideration in reviewing the programs as I promised the provincial housing ministers I would, and as we look for new ways to assist the hon. member's constituents and other low income Canadians across the country.

The hon. member suggested that there have been undue delays in the implementation of NIP and RRAP, the neighbourhood improvement program and the residential rehabilitation assistance program. We have made tremendous headway in bringing in these new programs.

First of all, with respect to the Neighbourhood Improvement Program, we signed the necessary agreements with all ten provinces for 1974 and are in the process of negotiating the 1975 agreements now. In 1974, \$48½ million was allocated for grants to municipalities, and \$50½ million has been budgeted for 1975. So, we are seeing increases as it comes on stream.

Following the signing of the 1974 agreements, the provinces designated 86 municipalities in which neighbourhood improvement areas were to be selected. These municipalities have selected 87 neighbourhoods, and activity has proceeded to the implementation stage in 34. The other 53 are at the planning stage. The selection of an additional 20 neighbourhoods is in process. The people who reside in these neighbourhoods are actively engaged in determining the needs of the neighbourhoods for assistance under the

[Mr. Marshall.]

legislation. I think we can be proud of these achievements. I am delighted with the support we have had from the provinces and municipalities and I am sure, as we move through 1975, that this program will show further very positive results.

We must not overlook that it was this House that passed the legislation that required municipalities to adopt bylaws of minimum maintenance and occupancy standards. All the municipalities participating in the program have had to enact these bylaws, and this in itself is a most important achievement.

Turning next to the implementation of the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, as hon. members know, the legislation prescribes that grants and loans for the rehabilitation of substandard property can be made available in NIP areas or in areas especially designated by Order-in-Council. Now that we have 87 areas designated under the NIP program, it is possible for CMHC to apply the benefits of RRAP, and I am very happy to be able to inform the House that rehabilitation loans and grants have been made in 22 municipalities, and a similar number of municipalities will shortly be in a position to benefit from this program. I should mention that it would be inappropriate for me to take all the credit for these programs since this more properly belongs to my predecessor, and to the provinces and municipalities which have so wholeheartedly co-operated with us.

It has been suggested that the rural and native housing program announced last year by the federal government has been slow in getting started. No one is more anxious than I to get this program moving. I would like to assure the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe, and other members of this House, that we are proceeding as quickly as possible with the delivery of homes and the rehabilitation of dwellings under this program. Under agreements which we signed some years ago with the provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba we have provided 848 units for low income residents in remote northern areas. Agreements have been signed with Newfoundland, P.E.I., New Brunswick, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia, and signings with other provinces are expected shortly.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the minister, but the time allotted to him has expired.

AIR CANADA—POSSIBLE INCLUSION OF WINNIPEG FINANCE BRANCH IN TERMS OF INQUIRY

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg South Centre): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by commending the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand), through you and the parliamentary secretary, for initiating a public inquiry into Air Canada's management with regard to the payment of \$100,000 to McGregor Travel Agency of Montreal. The Minister looked objectively at the situation, saw the problem, and made an appropriate and accurate response. Now he must extend his objectivity and sincerity to the equally serious problems at the Air Canada finance branch in Winnipeg. There are a number of reasons why this situation is even more serious and in much more desperate need of a full public airing of the facts.