

## HOUSING

**Mr. J.W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

It has been encouraging to note that housing industry activity in Canada has been increasing in recent months. For example, at the end of the last period, May 31, for the first five months this year housing starts were just over 52,000, whereas a year ago at this time they were under 40,000. We have a long way to go to recover the pre-recession levels of housing activity in this country, but we have a good start.

I would like to ask the minister if the measures which were introduced to stimulate housing earlier this year have had an impact and, if so, which of the two, the 95 per cent mortgage or the RRSP funding, has been most effective.

**Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to inform my colleague that there is some good news from the housing sector these days. There is more to be done of course but some of these measures have had a noticeable effect.

I guess the most encouraging one would be the 5 per cent down payment provision, the first-home buyer's loan provision, which since February has resulted in about 30,000 such purchases, about 1,000 in Nova Scotia and about 800 in the province of New Brunswick. The encouraging thing is that a survey done by Canada Mortgage and Housing shows that about 75 per cent of these transactions would not have occurred without this program.

Another thing that is encouraging is the budgetary measure involving the RRSPs which also has been positive but which is not as easy to quantify.

Of course the most beneficial policy of all, as the House knows, has been the unprecedented low rate of inflation and interest rates which have contributed greatly to housing in this country and have made homes much more affordable.

## Oral Questions

## FISHERIES

**Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

On May 4 at the Standing Committee of Fisheries and Oceans the minister stated a number of times that the safety and effectiveness of wharfs was his top priority. Since that time little has been done in my riding of Egmont or, indeed, in Prince Edward Island.

Given the serious state of disrepair of wharfs like Tignish Run and Miminigash and the need for dredging at wharfs like Howards Cove and Milligan's Shore, can the minister assure the fishermen at these ports that emergency work will be carried out immediately?

**Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman's question sounded like a line from an Irish Rover song. Luckily I happen to have on hand a report on the Howards Cove, Miminigash, Milligan's Shore, and Tignish wharfs. I must be psychic.

We have 90 projects at over 50 harbours in P.E.I. and we will spend in excess of \$2.6 million. I do not have much time. At Howards Cove the harbour basin dredging has begun. At Miminigash the breakwater reconstruction project is in the engineering stage. A public tender should be called in August.

Your colleagues are shouting me down so I have to stop.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** I probably should insist on this going on the Order Paper but the hon. member has a very short supplemental.

• (1500)

**Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the very generous leprechaun, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

I am sure he is aware that a few years ago a number of fishermen lost their lives at Alberton because of the lack of dredging and the lack of response to requests to have dredging done. I am sure like myself the minister would not like to see that action recur.