

an Armed Forces were ready to act quickly at the request of the Quebec government. Unfortunately, it is not customary for the federal government to act unilaterally in such cases without the approval of the provincial governments. However, we are prepared to make available to the hon. member and his colleagues the equipment that he would need to visit the flooded areas so as to show everyone that the Canadian Armed Forces are ready to help Quebecers and other Canadians.

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[English]

CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

CAPITAL BUDGET AND SOCIAL HOUSING CUTBACKS

Mrs. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, as the minister responsible for CMHC is obviously ashamed to show his face in the House today.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mrs. Mitchell: The announcement today that capital funds for CMHC would be cut by over \$2 million, at a time when costs are inflated, and that social housing units would be cut by 5,000, at a time when there should be a huge increase, is of major concern to all Canadians. Will the minister explain how he and his government can justify these drastic capital cost cutbacks to CMHC when he knows, as my hon. friend said, that vacancy rates are below zero in most Canadian cities, people simply cannot afford the cost of housing, municipalities are begging for community service grants, and native and northern housing is a national disgrace?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I will draw the hon. member's representations to the attention of the minister responsible for CMHC.

Mrs. Mitchell: Madam Speaker, I would consider that quite irresponsible, since the Minister of Finance is certainly the one who has a major say in the budget. Since the minister a few minutes ago was asking for suggestions from the opposition, he might consider the representation from Vancouver for \$15 million for land banking, not to mention the repeated requests for increases in social housing money. Will the minister explain why he has cut back, instead of increasing the number of social housing units, when he knows that most Canadians cannot now afford private home ownership with interest rates at 16 per cent or over? People simply must have shelter for their children, and social housing is the only answer.

● (1450)

Mr. MacEachen: Madam Speaker, the hon. member has asked me to justify why we are not undertaking more spending in the Canadian economy. I would remind the hon. member that housing starts in January showed some considerable improvement.

Oral Questions

Mr. Rae: Compared to 1965, or what?

Mr. MacEachen: The hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood asks compared to what—compared to the previous month of December.

Mr. Rae: Which was the lowest.

Mr. MacEachen: I remind the hon. member that if he looked more carefully at his statistics rather than barracking in the House of Commons he would make a more constructive contribution.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

SUMMER JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. In view of the fact that the majority of the government's make-work programs are geared to the winter months, when the northern native population is involved in hunting, fishing and trapping, as opposed to the summer months, when the real level of native youth unemployment is highest, what specific funds will the minister make available to create jobs this summer for our native young people who so badly need summer jobs?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Madam Speaker, consideration is now being given to a policy which would provide job opportunities for native young people this summer.

INDIAN HOUSING PROGRAM

Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is also directed to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. I refer to a comment made by the hon. member for Vancouver East who mentioned a report in the *Canadian Press* which revealed that cabinet has decided to reduce CMHC's special housing program by almost \$2 million. This special social housing program includes housing projects for native people. What is the minister doing to ensure that this program, which affects our native population, will not be cut and that this badly needed housing will be built in the summer months by young native people, thus ensuring them jobs, training, and the badly needed houses? Will the minister promise that this area with regard to native housing will not be cut back?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Madam Speaker, as the hon. member should know, this government committed itself to additional funding this year over and above what the previous administration had given for Indian housing. This was done not only because of the backlog which existed but also to provide job