

operator services. This program includes the continuous update of the Telephone Operator Practices Manual, maintenance of bilingual services in accordance with the Official Languages Act, improvement of sensitivity and responsiveness to the public including the provision of information services such as the government index of programs and services.

[English]

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could ask the parliamentary secretary when we can expect an answer to question No. 576 on the order paper. It concerns the budget to the beef import consultative committee which was just referred to in the question of privilege. I think it is very important for us to receive an answer as soon as possible. I received an answer to a similar question last week which caused a very interesting ruling in the House.

While I am on my feet, I wonder whether the parliamentary secretary can tell us when we will have an answer to question No. 578 which deals with the special Conservative adviser on prairie branch lines. Also can he tell us when we can expect an answer to question No. 579 which deals with other Conservative task forces. I know of at least two which are in existence. One was headed up by a member from Dartmouth, I believe; it dealt with energy self-sufficiency. I believe that task force is no longer in existence. Another one was headed by an Ontario member; I forget his riding, but it involved seasonal farm workers. Also I heard through the rumour mill that perhaps it involved a trip to the Caribbean. I am not sure of that, but I think it is very important to receive the answers to those questions.

In addition to the question of privilege with which we dealt the other day, and the four Conservative caucus committees which we already know exist that are possibly being funded by the treasury, perhaps many, many more exist than those we know about. When can we expect those answers?

Mr. Wightman: Mr. Speaker, certainly I will take notice of the three numbered questions to which the hon. member referred. I will undertake to give him a reply as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker: Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 54, I do now leave the chair for the House to go into Committee of the Whole.

Mortgage Tax Credit

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

INCOME TAX ACT

AMENDMENT TO PROVIDE TAX CREDIT IN RESPECT OF MORTGAGE INTEREST AND PROPERTY TAX

The House resumed from Monday, December 10, consideration in committee of Bill C-20, to amend the Income Tax Act to provide a tax credit in respect of mortgage interest and home owner property tax—Mr. Crosbie—Mr. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton) in the chair.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Order, please. When the committee rose on Monday, December 10, 1979, clause 1 of the bill was under consideration.

On clause 1—

Mr. Watson: Mr. Chairman, last evening I outlined a number of the inequities in Bill C-20 that undoubtedly will give rise to the second thought which the sunset amendment proposed by the hon. member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry is designed to act upon.

Surely hon. gentlemen opposite must now recognize that the program outlined in this bill will be horrendously expensive. It will be uneven and unfair in its application to various regions of Canada. It will distinguish, in a most unjust way, between home owners and renters and between home owners with large mortgages and those home owners without mortgages, most of whom are in the older age brackets.

There is another aspect of this bill which is unfortunate. As unfair as it is to so many taxpayers in Canada, the bill has another major defect which has gone largely unmentioned in this debate. The hon. member for Mississauga South summed up what I mean by that last night when he referred to what this bill would do to help the sale of houses; in other words, what it would do to help the real estate industry. The brutal truth is that this bill is a continuation of Conservative policies which reflect the tremendous influence land developers have with that party.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

● (1530)

Mr. Watson: Just listen to the facts. The land banking provisions of the National Housing Act have been on the books since 1953. The use of those provisions could have avoided fantastic inflation in land costs around Toronto and even around Ottawa, but those land banking provisions were ignored by the Conservative government of Ontario to the benefit of Ontario land speculators.

Let me give two or three other examples. What happened to Pickering and what happened to South East City? They were sabotaged by the Conservative government of Ontario. If that is not caving in to land speculators, then those opposite who are heckling should check their facts.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!