

Canada will be met by any new and more effective measures by his department under the National Housing Act?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the assisted home ownership plan which parliament passed is designed specifically to fill the needs of low and moderate income people.

An hon. Member: Is that all you have?

Mr. Basford: It is beginning to take effect and it is working extremely well in most parts of the country. The statement to which the hon. member referred concerns the metropolitan Toronto area where the president of CMHC was making a very special appeal to builders to take advantage of the program.

INCREASE IN COST OF HOUSING—SUGGESTED FISCAL ACTION TO STOP GOUGING BY DEVELOPERS

Mr. David Lewis (York South): May I put a final supplementary question, again to the Minister of Finance. It has been pointed out in statistics and in statements by leaders of the building industry that the price of houses is almost totally unrelated to the cost of land, to the cost of labour or to the cost of materials because of the way in which home builders and developers are taking advantage of the immense demand in this country and are gouging home buyers beyond reason. May I ask the Minister of Finance whether he will give consideration, if he has not already done so, to an effective fiscal measure to stop this housing gouging of people who try to buy homes by developers?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I take into full account the statement that the hon. gentleman has just made and of course I will continue to consult my colleague, the Minister of State for Urban Affairs.

[Translation]

SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION OF DIVIDEND BY BANK OF CANADA TO OFFSET FOOD PRICE INCREASES

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Finance.

Since food prices have increased by 9.3 per cent while wages have risen by 3 to 5 per cent, would the minister seriously consider the distribution of a national dividend by the Bank of Canada in order to gear the workers' purchasing power to the actual cost of living?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that the remedy suggested by the hon. member is the appropriate one.

[English]

INCREASE IN FOOD PRICES—INQUIRY AS TO GOVERNMENT ACTION TO BRING IMMEDIATE RELIEF TO CANADIANS

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. In view of the fact

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the annual increase in the cost of food is 18.4 per cent, which represents the highest increase since 1951, and in view of the fact parliament may adjourn for the Christmas recess very soon, may I ask the Prime Minister what steps the government will take to bring immediate relief to Canadians by lowering the price of food in this country?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the answer to this question was already given.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, I did not hear the Prime Minister's answer. Perhaps I can redirect my question or perhaps the Prime Minister might want to answer it now. I will put a supplementary question to the Prime Minister and ask him whether his government intends to act to do something about the disgraceful rise in food prices in this country?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. McGrath: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Prime Minister is showing contempt for the most serious problem facing this country today. Notwithstanding the fact he may have received the support of the NDP last night, that does not relieve him of his responsibility to do something about inflation in this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: It is his responsibility to answer this question right now.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Trudeau: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the hon. member that I have answered both his questions but that the shouting on his own side has prevented him from hearing the answers.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (1420)

Mr. Trudeau: I just want to add, Mr. Speaker, that it is not my habit to raise my voice, as the hon. member does, to cover the shouting as he has to do.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I want to say with regard—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crouse: Who's shouting now?

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker—