

*Oral Questions***HOUSING**

## REQUEST FOR CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT POLICIES

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is for the minister responsible for housing. In this field also the government's policy is not working. The mortgage renewal program has been used only by about 1,000 Canadians. The incentive program for new rental units is simply inadequate. That fact has been expressed to us by many people in the country. In the early part of this year, single family housing starts, as I said yesterday, have dropped 58 per cent. Housing construction is the most labour-intensive industry in the country. I have a simple question for the minister. Does he not realize the damage his lack of housing policies are causing? Will the minister encourage his colleague, the Minister of Finance, to include some changes in housing policy if, as, and when, he brings in a new economic program?

**Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works):** Madam Speaker, on the contrary, I believe the government's policy on housing is working.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Cosgrove:** As a matter of fact, the announcement by the government of \$30 million going into rehabilitation housing was so successful that the demand for that program was taken up in one week. That program not only put \$30 million into rehabilitation but drew \$60 million from the private sector. We have encouraged Canadians to take money out of the banks. We know that Canadians are putting money into banks in unparalleled amounts. This program will take \$60 million out of the banks to be matched by \$30 million from the federal government. It will be used to get Canadians working in the trades that have been hit by unemployment in about 50 centres across the country.

**Mr. Wilson:** Madam Speaker, I notice there is only scattered applause on the other side. I think there is a very good reason for that. Single-family housing starts are down 58 per cent. That is a fact. That statistic comes from the minister's own department. He said that it is working. If it is working according to his objectives, we must wonder what are his objectives.

● (1120)

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order. The hon. member must be reasonable and go to his question; he is making speeches.

**Mr. Wilson:** Madam Speaker, I am frustrated. I think many, many Canadians are frustrated.

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**Mr. Wilson:** All the members of the minister's caucus are also frustrated.

**Madam Speaker:** Order!

**THE ECONOMY**

## REQUEST FOR CONFIDENCE INSTILLING POLICIES

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** Madam Speaker, since so many members of the government caucus, the group of ten and the economic development committee, have gone public with their concerns and have gone to the Parti Québécois for advice, would the Minister of Finance explain to Canadians why he will not say today that he will bring in some new economic policies to give Canadians some hope and some sense of confidence that there is direction in the Government of Canada to lead us out of the problems we are facing?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, because I disagree totally with the preamble to the hon. member's question. I do not see its relevance at the present time.

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**ENERGY**

## QUERY RESPECTING POSSIBILITY OF ASSISTANCE TO DOME PETROLEUM CORPORATION

**Mr. John Thomson (Calgary South):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. Now that the government has destroyed the Canadian oil and gas industry by virtue of its disastrous National Energy Program, could the minister tell the House whether it is the government's intention to provide financial assistance to Dome Petroleum? Has the government made any commitment, or is it in the process of considering any commitment to provide financial assistance to Dome Petroleum?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, the problems relating to the oil and gas industry are obviously under constant consideration by the government, as are problems relating to other sectors of the economy. When any decisions arising from these considerations are made, I assure the hon. member that they will be announced in the regular way.

## GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. John Thomson (Calgary South):** Madam Speaker, when will the Minister of Finance answer a simple, straightforward question in the House? When on earth can we obtain an answer? Let me just put my question to him one more time. I would like a simple answer. Will the government provide financial assistance to Dome Petroleum, or will it not? It is a simple, straightforward question. Will the minister please answer it?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, the same answer stands. If and when a decision is taken on the matter, it will be announced.

**Miss MacDonald:** Conditionally.