

Oral Questions

to help culture and art, because the Secretary of State was complaining there was not enough money in his coffers?

Has the minister decided to stop funding Hockey Canada and will now fund the CAHA? Finally, has the minister allocated the \$1.2 million for the native peoples' sports program?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, I presume the question is directed to me, although I do not believe the hon. member indicated that it was. The subject of it would suggest that it was.

Mr. Paproski: Good guess.

Mr. Regan: In answer to the series of questions asked by the hon. member, I will attempt to deal with each of them as best as I can remember them. First of all, in relation to the accumulated interest on the two cheques which have been forwarded by the corporation which is running the provincial lotteries for the provinces, each in the amount of \$6 million, they have been left as uncertified cheques at our request so that the interest could accrue to the benefit of the worth-while causes pursued by the ten provinces. It is another example of good federal-provincial relations on behalf of this government.

In giving that \$750,000 to the provinces, I have to take a back seat to the hon. member's policy, which I am obviously following. While negotiating the handover of the lotteries, he gave the provinces \$58 million in revenue which we previously had. I certainly look like a piker in comparison, considering the \$750,000 gift to the provinces.

An hon. Member: You always did.

Mr. Lambert: You always were a piker.

Mr. Regan: I will never be able to live up to the generosity which the hon. member achieved. I am sure the hon. member is aware that the interest is accruing to the provinces because those cheques have not yet been cashed. In all probability they will be cashed before long, but I wanted to be in the position of having all the provinces understand that we do so without prejudice because of the incomplete agreement which does not even indicate the term of the agreement which was achieved by letter without a federal-provincial exchange.

With regard to assistance to athletes in training, if that is what the hon. member means when he refers to scholarships, a policy is under way and a great number of first-class athletes are receiving and have received letters recently on their support for the coming year. In relation to the scholarship question, attendance at university, as the hon. member knows, some provinces such as British Columbia have moved in this direction. The federal government does not at the moment have a policy, nor does the CIAU, the universities' organization.

I believe the hon. member had a question—

Madam Speaker: Order. I suppose hon. members opposite appreciate complete answers, but I think I shall have to cut the minister off.

Mr. Paproski: Madam Speaker, my question has nothing to do with the Loto agreement. My question was to the minister of sport. I was so excited that you recognized me that I forgot to mention the minister.

My supplementary question is to the minister of sport. The question I raised has nothing to do with the Loto agreement. It refers to the \$750,000 in interest on the unclaimed Loto funds, money which is unclaimed by the winners. It is this \$750,000 in which I am interested. What does the government intend to do with this money?

Mr. Regan: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for clarifying the particular money about which he is speaking. One of the unfortunate aspects is that it is not yet clear what money, if any, will be left over from lottery funds. It is unclear for two reasons. One reason is that some money was held because of unclaimed prizes. The other reason is that in the haste of the previous administration, the interim government, to give away the lotteries to the provinces, they broke agreements with a large number of wholesalers and, as a consequence, there is very considerable litigation against the government. Those funds are being held to see whether or not they will have to be paid out in settlements because of the way in which the members opposite broke contracts.

Mr. Paproski: You are a complete dingbat.

Mr. Nielsen: Unadulterated rubbish.

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HOUSING

ESTABLISHMENT OF MORTGAGE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Public Works in his responsibility as minister of housing. It concerns the very serious situation which the lumber sector of the wood converting industry and the construction industry throughout the country currently face.

Is the minister's department at this time seriously considering the proclamation of a bill which was passed by this House in 1973 in support of the establishment of a mortgage exchange corporation?

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, I would be happy to take notice of the question asked by the hon. member. I might say that we are cognizant of the turndown in the industry generally. However, I am encouraged as a result of the information on starts for last month, which are back up to 151,000. This is comparable with the starts in March and April.

Mr. Oberle: Madam Speaker, it would appear the minister is not aware of that particular legislation. It was hailed at the time it was introduced as the solution to many problems in the housing industry, particularly with regard to high interest rates.