

Oral Questions

● (1450)

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): I am considering the matter. I am not ready to do that yet.

RENTAL OF SPACE IN CHAMBLY BUILDING—PAYMENT OF RENT BEFORE OCCUPANCY

Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview): Mr. Speaker, my question, too, is directed to the Solicitor General. Is the hon. gentleman aware that the RCMP has rented seven floors of office space in the new Chambly Building at the corner of Cooper and Bank Streets and that though the premises will not be ready until November 1 they started to pay full rent as of February 1 amounting to between \$600,000 and \$700,000? Is this an example of government restraint as practiced by his department?

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): I was not aware that the RCMP was renting that space.

Some hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. Allmand: I would point out that under his terms of reference the Solicitor General is not responsible for the day to day administration of the RCMP.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Allmand: I can say that the RCMP is a part of the government which exercises very great restraint in the spending of public funds.

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FINANCE

INTERVENTION OF BANK OF CANADA TO SUPPORT CANADIAN DOLLAR—POSSIBLE CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Peter Bawden (Calgary South): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Minister of Finance. In view of the report that Bank of Canada traders officially intervened in the foreign exchange market on Monday, reversing a sharp decline in the value of the Canadian dollar, will the minister advise us whether the Bank of Canada is implementing government policy having regard to the statement by the Prime Minister in the House on the same day that the Canadian dollar was floating freely?

Hon. C. M. Drury (Acting Minister of Finance): I think it is well recognized—it has been stated on a number of occasions—that the dollar is free in the sense of being subject to long term movements in the international marketplace. However, to avoid sharp fluctuations there is intervention by the Bank of Canada periodically.

Mr. Bawden: In view of the fact that this was a fairly massive intervention, one which did reverse the decline of the dollar, would it be true to say there has been a change of policy and that Canadian currency is not now floating freely?

Mr. Drury: I think that would be a wrong conclusion to draw.

[Mr. Lawrence.]

HOUSING

SUGGESTED CHANGE FROM FIVE TO ONE YEAR LEASES TO PERMIT MOBILE HOME OWNERS TO QUALIFY FOR \$500 GRANT

Mr. Ken Hurlburt (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for Urban Affairs. It arises from the fact that many mobile home owners are faced with signing five year leases in order to receive the \$500 grant under CMHC provisions. Will the hon. gentleman tell us whether this clause could be amended to read "one year"? This would prevent discrimination against first time trailer home owners.

Hon. Barney Danson (Secretary of State for Urban Affairs): The hon. member has drawn attention to one of the problems which has arisen. The five year land lease requirement was necessary to establish regular residence. The intention is, of course, to avoid subsidizing the purchase of what are strictly travel trailers. I cannot give the hon. member the assurance he seeks right now, but I am looking into the matter.

Mr. J. Robert Howie (York-Sunbury): With mobile homes presently constituting 13 per cent of all residential housing in Canada, is the minister considering regulations to encourage the purchase of such homes?

Mr. Danson: We already have measures designed for that purpose. I consider mobile and manufactured homes to be a major factor, particularly in some parts of the country, and as a very real answer, temporary in cases, to some people's housing needs.

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INCOME TAX

PROPOSED EXTENSION OF DATE FOR FILING

Mr. John Wise (Elgin): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Revenue. In view of the uncertainty and delay in mail services and in view of the government's own tardy record in supplying T-4 slips on time, has the hon. gentleman considered any extension of the date of submission of income tax returns?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of National Revenue): The answer is, no. I am not aware of any difficulties which preclude people from putting their tax returns in the mail, which is the date that governs.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

INQUIRY AS TO CHECK TO ASCERTAIN IF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WORKING AS CLEANERS

Mr. J. R. Ellis (Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Public Works. Has the minister checked to determine whether any illegal immigrants are working as cleaners in buildings under the supervision of the Department of Public Works or whether any illegal immigrants are employed by building cleaning contractors working for his department?