

*Oral Questions*MORTGAGE DEFAULTS UNDER AHOP—STUDY COMMISSIONED
BY TREASURY BOARD

Mr. Dean Whiteway (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question for the President of the Treasury Board concerning a study of which he is, of course, aware as it was commissioned by Treasury Board and relates to AHOP defaults. The study was done on the urging of several major lending institutions in the country.

Could the minister tell the House why this study on AHOP defaults, commissioned by Treasury Board, is classified as a national security document and therefore cannot be released to the Canadian public?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I will inquire as to the accuracy of the hon. member's description of the document and report back.

POSSIBLE RENT INCREASE OF 50 PER CENT FOR ELDERLY AND
LOW INCOME PERSONS IN TORONTO

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of State for Urban Affairs, I shall put my question to the Minister of Finance; possibly it is more appropriate for it to be put to him in any case.

In view of reports to the effect that if a certain agreement is reached in Toronto today among provincial and federal ministers of housing, the result will be that 150,000 elderly persons and low income families will face rent increases of up to 50 per cent, which for such persons is a very serious situation, will the Minister of Finance interest himself in this matter and see if he cannot make some proposal to his colleague, the Minister of State for Urban Affairs, to avoid putting this kind of burden on these people?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I will look into the question. I am not aware of this problem.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. In view of the fact that the minister's colleague, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, is having a good deal to say these days about the need for the Minister of Finance to concern himself with the incomes of older people, tax credits, housing, and so on, will the minister look into this matter, not just by way of consulting the Minister of State for Urban Affairs but from his own responsibility as Minister of Finance to make sure that this suffering is not imposed?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, concerning the payments we are making to the needy in Canada, I suggest that the official documents are self-explanatory. Spending in social areas has increased to such an extent in Canada over the past five years that the question, generally speaking, is not whether we should give more. The opinion is that we are giving too much already. I shall therefore find out if there is a special problem in this case, but I want to indicate to the hon. member that all our

[Mr. Chrétien.]

social programs in Canada are indexed, and that we should not be ashamed of our social policies.

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[*English*]

FISHERIES

POSSIBILITY OF U.S. IMPOSING COUNTERVAILING DUTIES ON
IMPORTED FISH PRODUCTS

Mr. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, my question was for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, or it could be for the Minister of Fisheries, but they are not here. It could be for the Deputy Prime Minister, but he is not here. The Prime Minister could have answered, but he is not here either. The Secretary of State for External Affairs is relevant, but he is not here. So I should like to ask my question of the Minister of Finance.

As the minister should be aware, the export of Canadian fishery products is heavily dependent on the United States market. There is now the possibility of countervailing duty being imposed there, and there is already duty on semi-processed fish products from Canada of 2½ cents per pound.

In view of these facts, can the minister tell the House whether the government is making any special effort—and, if so, what—to negotiate the lowering of the 15 per cent tariff of the European Common Market on the export of Canadian fish products? Is there a special effort under way to achieve this, in view of the fact that we are dependent on one market primarily and that market may be in danger?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, this is exactly what the Canadian government is doing at the GATT negotiations in Geneva at this time. We are trying to get better access for Canadian products all over the world, including the European market.

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, I thought that might be the minister's reply. He is not blustering like his colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, with his crocodile tears. If that is the case, could the minister tell the House why the minister has to wait for the GATT negotiations? Why were Norway and Iceland both successful in negotiating the tariff down to 3 per cent for Icelandic and Norwegian fishery products into the EEC, when Canada apparently can get nowhere and has to wait for GATT? We have been hearing about GATT, GATT, GATT all year. Why is it that Norway and Iceland did not have to wait for GATT? Will the minister take some action to follow this up as an emergency?

● (1427)

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member was aware of the situation, he would know that the GATT negotiations are proceeding very well. We hope they will be completed this year. So I think the hon. member should make an effort to know the facts before asking that kind of a question.