

*Oral Questions***HOUSING**ACHIEVEMENTS OF CANADIAN HOME OWNERSHIP
STIMULATION PLAN

Mr. Norman Kelly (Scarborough Centre): Madam Speaker, the Canadian Home Ownership Stimulation Plan, which was announced in the June, 1982, budget to provide stimulus to the recession-damaged housing industry, is now beginning to wind down. Monday, February 28, is the deadline for some grant applications. This program, which has paid out almost \$500,000 in grants of \$3,000 each to 166,000 first-time home buyers, has proved extraordinarily useful to Canadians.

Now that Government policies have resulted in reduced inflation and, therefore, have reduced interest rates, this kind of direct stimulus can be phased out. In view of the importance of the housing industry to our economy, we should continue to monitor the situation.

Ministers are usually the best judges of what is within the realm of their responsibility, however, but I just give this caution.

Hon. Herb Gray (President of Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, last week the Prime Minister made it clear that it is not the practice in our constitutional system for records of Cabinet meetings to be tabled. I think this point should be reiterated.

I reject completely the assertion of the Hon. Member that there is a consensus on the part of the Canadian people that the guidelines were broken. With respect to the evidence before us, I think it makes it clear that there has not been any budget leak.

Mr. Andre: Madam Speaker, this question of keeping Cabinet documents secret protects Ministers and bureaucrats. The parliamentary responsibility of Ministers, and agreement to observe conflict of interest guidelines, protect parliamentary democracy, which is far more important.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE ADMINISTRATIONCAPE BRETON COAL AGREEMENT—REQUEST THAT TREASURY
BOARD MINUTES BE TABLED

Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister, of the Deputy Prime Minister and of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, I will put my question to the Minister of Finance.

After a weekend of consultation and observation, the Minister of Finance will know that the majority of Canadians believe that he and Mr. Gillespie are in violation of the conflict of interest guidelines and, quite possibly, the Deputy Prime Minister is as well.

Given that there is also evidence pointing to a budget leak in October, 1980, it is crucially important to our system of government that the Government either admit wrong doing through obtaining the resignation of the appropriate Minister or Ministers, or table and make available all relevant records to give confidence that the total picture is known and that a cover-up is not in place.

Will the Minister of Finance commit to the House that he or the appropriate Minister will table the missing information, not so far provided, such as the Treasury Board minutes of the relevant April, 1981, meeting, as well as the September, 1981, meeting, or at least the submission regarding the Scotia Coal Synfuels Project to the Treasury Board?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I am not sure that that question should be answered by the Minister of Finance. I know there was a reference to a budget leak, but the question did not concern the budget leak.

REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE INVESTIGATION

Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre): Madam Speaker, the violation of these minimal conflict of interest guidelines, a possible budget leak—and indeed the circumstantial evidence points to a budget leak—the clear intent to avoid responsibility and to cover up the situation, have severely damaged our parliamentary system. A complete and thorough airing of the situation is absolutely fundamental to commence repairing that damage.

Will the appropriate Minister—and I do not know who that might be—commit here and now to the House that the Government will permit, and indeed encourage, an inquiry by a committee of this House? Refusal of a request to allow a committee of this House, in fact, to encourage a committee of this House to investigate the situation, will simply be confirmation of an interest in trying to cover up this clear breach of ministerial responsibility and these very simple and unonerous conflict of interest guidelines.

Hon. Herb Gray (President of Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, this matter has been the subject of questions and answers in Question Period for close to two weeks. It was the subject of a special day long debate created at the initiative of the Government, a debate which not only allowed speeches to be made on the subject but also questions and answers, as provided under our new rules.

We have had a very full opportunity to go into this matter in a body more important than a committee, and that is the House of Commons itself. This is especially so since the Government tabled a full range of documents pertaining to this matter.

If we do not agree to the Hon. Member's suggestion, it is confirmation of nothing more than that we do not want to