

Mr. Trudeau: —and presumably the NDP. We are all concerned about this.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: They never say no.

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, I am sure that this position of the entire Parliament of Canada will be very important in my representations to President Reagan.

Mr. Mayer: Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is to the Prime Minister. Many from both parties in opposition have made suggestions about some things we should be doing to represent our concerns about Garrison to the Americans. We know now that the new Secretary of the Interior, James Watt, apparently will be more favourably disposed toward the completion of the project than was the Carter administration. I wonder if the Prime Minister and the government will accept some of the suggestions we have made, for instance, with regard to sending an all-party delegation of our legislators to the U.S. capital to persuade them on our behalf, or if he has any other new initiatives that he could announce. This is clearly a federal responsibility but I think a lot of us would like to see the federal government assume some of its responsibilities in this regard.

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, the federal minister of the environment intends to meet with the Secretary of the Interior of the United States in the near future. If, as a result of my discussions with President Reagan and the meeting I have just indicated, it appears to be useful to exercise further representations with the United States Congress and administration, I will gladly consider the recommendation of the hon. member.

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HOUSING

COMMITMENT TO NON-PROFIT SOCIAL HOUSING

Mr. Doug Lewis (Simcoe North): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Public Works who is responsible for housing. On February 18, 1981, I asked the minister what action the government was taking on high interest rates. The minister pointed out that the government had increased the annual commitment for non-profit social housing from 25,000 starts to 30,000 starts per year. One week later CMHC announced that the commitment for social housing had been cut back by cabinet. I would ask the minister if it is not true that at the same time he was bragging about increasing social housing starts he already knew they had been cut back by cabinet?

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, the allocation of 5,000 additional social housing starts last year is just that, an allocation for starts. Those projects will come on stream this year and it is expected that with those starts coming into the marketplace this year, where it is anticipated that the market is in a rebound position, the general effect in the market, the impact of those additional

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starts from last year, means it is possible for the corporation to stand back and observe the market for a little while further.

Mr. Lewis: I am interested in the rebound because CMHC recently revised its 1981 estimated housing starts downward by 9,300 units. That reduction is entirely for multiple unit dwellings. An official of CMHC has attributed the lowering of the forecast to continuing concern about mortgage rates. How can we rebound up when CMHC says we are rebounding down? What action does the minister plan to take to stimulate this market?

● (1440)

Mr. Cosgrove: Madam Speaker, when I was referring to rebounds, I was comparing the projections for starts in 1981 to those of 1980, and to the two previous years before that. I think the hon. member will agree that by all standards, all projections show starts in 1981 will be ahead of those in 1980. That is what I meant by a rebound.

In terms of multiple starts, the province of Ontario, for example, has built upon the MURB provision, which was introduced in last fall's budget. By a subsidy of \$4,200 per unit in the multiple area the province of Ontario has indicated and identified a responsibility in the market which we perceive will be another increase in the multiple market. I wish that some of the other provinces, where there has been difficulty—for example, the difficulty in British Columbia which was identified today in a motion under the provisions of Standing Order 43—would also follow that lead and attempt to build on the work and the leadership which this government has shown.

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CORPORATE AFFAIRS

PRICING PRACTICES OF OIL COMPANIES—RELATIONSHIP OF IMPERIAL OIL COMPANY WITH GOVERNMENT

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Madam Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The report clearly identifies that the problem we face today in large part is the responsibility of Imperial Oil. Imperial Oil is a ringleader in the unconscionable sting that has been placed on Canadian people for about \$89 million. Every minister of consumer and corporate affairs since 1973 has known about this. Could the minister explain to this House, with the knowledge those ministers have, why Imperial Oil was allowed to have a special relationship with the government in advising the government on confidential energy policy? In addition, why did the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs approve the appointment of the president of Imperial Oil to a special committee which gave advice on competition legislation in Canada?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!