

Inquiries of the Ministry

the past week end, to comment on particular points or specific aspects of the discussions which were held.

FEASIBILITY STUDY OF NATIONAL GRID PROPOSAL

On the orders of the day:

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonavista-Twillin-gate): I should like to ask the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources whether the proposed technical study of the feasibility of the national power grid is to be conducted under his department and, if so, whether there have been any funds appropriated for the purpose.

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources): The feasibility study will be conducted under the auspices of the committee of ministers that met to discuss this subject last Monday. It will require no extra appropriation.

Mr. Pickersgill: Could the minister say under what vote the expenses will be paid?

Mr. Dinsdale: There will be no additional money required for this study, inasmuch as the departmental officials will be carrying out the necessary technical work.

HOUSING

TORONTO—CONTINUING GUARANTEE OF MORTGAGES ON APARTMENT BUILDINGS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. H. McMillan (Welland): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Public Works. Is the government continuing to guarantee mortgages on apartment buildings in the Toronto area, when the Toronto press reports a high vacancy rate which is expected to get worse?

Hon. D. J. Walker (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy that the hon. member asked me this question, although he has not given me notice. I did notice the story in this morning's paper. I have checked the metro planning board report upon which the *Globe and Mail* based this story. It is interesting to note the conclusions reached in the report.

Based on the average absorption of 500 units a month that has been the experience since 1959, the market has not reached the saturation point; and, although the average vacancy rate is the highest to date, it represents only a moderate increase over last year and is the smallest increase ever recorded.

Nevertheless, we foresaw several months ago that the pace of construction of rental accommodation was perhaps a little bit fast, even for Toronto. Officials of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation therefore

[Mr. Fleming (Eglinton).]

established a committee that screens all N.H.A. rental applications in the metro area and turns back those for which they judge there will be little or no demand. Since the committee was formed, only 40 per cent of the loans requested for rental units have been approved, and I might add that none has been approved during the past two months.

The N.H.A. content of those rental units presently under construction in metro numbers 6,400. But because of the quality of the buildings and the select basis on which the C.M.H.C. screening committee operates, no difficulty is being experienced in renting them. As a matter of fact the new N.H.A.-financed apartments in Toronto are being rented as quickly as they are completed and available for rental.

We have not, of course in metro any vacancies in limited dividend or public housing projects which are built and financed as rental accommodation for lower income families and for elderly persons.

C.M.H.C.—REPORTED RENT INCREASES TO SENIOR CITIZENS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Public Works in view of recent correspondence reaching me and press reports to the effect that Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, which has authority over low rental housing—I refer to apartments and homes—made possible by C.M. H.C. agreements with provincial and municipal authorities, has instructed the administrators to increase the rents of the senior citizens, the blind and disabled by \$3 for single persons and \$7 for married persons.

May I ask the minister, in view of the \$10 increase in pension granted these persons by this House of Commons a few days ago, if the increase in rentals now demanded by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation was made with the knowledge and consent of the minister. If it was not, may I ask the minister if he will take this matter up with Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation in order to ensure that the old age pensioners who are dealing with Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation receive the full benefit of the \$10 increase?

Hon. D. J. Walker (Minister of Public Works): I am having a difficult time following the myriad questions, but I will be happy to sort them out and accept the questions as notice.