

Oral Questions

at least the middle of this week, or possibly toward the end of this week, to say how many people will qualify whose applications are valid, who have had footings poured and are ready to accept the \$3,000 grant. Again, this is not because we are counting paper slowly; it is because an application and a final awarding of the grant are dependent upon the inspection of the site. That is what our people are doing. They are working overtime, and we have added inspectors to the list.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, I want to tell the Minister of Public Works that there are thousands of people in the country who believe the Government is, in fact, counting paper very slowly.

SOURCE OF FUNDING

Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, I think the Government is obviously counting paper hoping to find more funds. The Minister should be in a position to tell the House where he is going to look for these funds. Is he going to look for these funds out of other programs under his jurisdiction, or from programs within the envelope from which his funds are drawn, or is he going to ask the Minister of Finance for more money? Has there been an approach made to the Minister of Finance for more money? Do we have his word that the decision will be made later this week and announced here in the House of Commons?

Mr. Nielsen: He could take it out of the \$200 million.

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, I am afraid most of the Hon. Member's questions are theoretical, and will be theoretical until I know exactly what is the size of the problem with which we are dealing. I can certainly not go to the Minister of Finance in a convincing way unless I can give him at least an indication of the amount of money I am talking about.

Mr. Nielsen: Two hundred million dollars did not bother him.

Mr. LeBlanc: If it were a modest amount, it is quite possible that we could rearrange within the total housing budget—

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): What is modest?

Mr. LeBlanc: The Hon. Member asks what is modest—

Mr. Nielsen: Anything within \$200 million.

Mr. LeBlanc: —I am afraid I will not risk answering that question.

TIME SPENT INSPECTING SITES

Hon. Bill Jarvis (Perth): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Public Works. I understand the Minister's undertaking vis-à-vis northern and isolated communities. There has been a very definite commitment there and I agree with that. But is the Minister now saying that he will not make representations to cabinet and to

the Minister of Finance with respect to all these people out there who are left dangling and waiting until his entire inspection process is done? In other words, is the Minister in a position where he will not assess what he calls the size of the problem until that very, very lengthy inspection process is completed? If so, does the Minister not appreciate what he is doing to those thousands of potential home owners because of that delay?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, I really think the Hon. Member is over dramatizing the inspection aspect. As I have said, the inspection operation consists of verification of whether footings have been poured. This is a very quick and summary operation. My officials tell me that by the middle or toward the end of this week we will know the size of the problem with which we are dealing in the overrun, and if the applications are beyond the \$30 million allocated, I think I would be unfair to those who are waiting for an answer if I led them to expect too much or if I led them to be pessimistic.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): You led them by the nose.

Mr. LeBlanc: I said in the House last week that I would be as reasonable and as flexible as possible. The idea of the program was to encourage home building. That has been achieved. Surely we do not want to discourage those last applicants if we can find a way to help them.

Mr. Lewis: They are still dangling.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER UNDERTAKE TO MAKE STATEMENT

Hon. Bill Jarvis (Perth): Madam Speaker, one thing that would not lead to undue optimism or undue pessimism would be some degree of certainty. If, as the Minister has just said, the inspection process will be done by mid-week or the end of this week, will he not undertake to advise this House a week from today—and through us those people who are sitting with offers to purchase that cannot be accepted or acted upon—of what will become of those people?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, if I am in a position to do this before next Monday, obviously I will. I certainly want to answer as quickly as possible the concerns of those who are worried.

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AIR CANADA

PROPOSAL THAT QUEBECAIR LEASE AIRCRAFT

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport concerning a \$200 million proposal which would have Quebecair operate a mothballed Air Canada DC-8 jet aircraft to be leased by, I believe, a travel company named Solvac. Could the Minister