

Oral Questions

SCREENING OF LEGAL ACTIONS AGAINST AIR CANADA

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Madam Speaker, I do not know what relevance the shooting of the captain of the ship has to what Mr. Justice Dubin has said. I think it may be more relevant in a parallel situation.

Mr. Justice Dubin's findings that Transport Canada management make safety inspections, and I quote, "ineffective", and has rendered safety analysis, and again I quote, "useless", hardly inspire confidence in the travelling public, particularly myself, as I have to travel from here to northern British Columbia.

On February 20 this year, while the minister was in charge of DOT, his director general of civil aeronautics prevented court action against Air Canada, a Crown corporation, because "this particular case risks serious embarrassment to the minister". That is quoting the director general. Does the minister agree that he should be protected from embarrassment when public safety is involved, or will he make a recommendation to scrap at least the DOT-Air Canada committee's power to screen possible legal actions against Air Canada?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, obviously I do not intend to enter into the details of all the case studies that the judge brought up. My hon. friend is an intelligent man and he knows that in all these matters there are different versions of what really happened. I do not intend to rehash the past. I do not think that it is in the national interest or in the interest of aviation to do that.

The important thing is that, on the basis of the premises, which I am not debating, Mr. Justice Dubin came out with a set of 75 new recommendations added to those in the previous report—on which, by the way, I have already acted in line with what Mr. Justice Dubin recommended. I do not intend to rehash that. I take the recommendations in the report, and that is what is important. These recommendations will be implemented.

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HOUSING

SITUATION OF AHOP HOME OWNERS FACING MORTGAGE RENEWALS

Mr. John McDermid (Brampton-Georgetown): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Public Works who is responsible for CMHC. There are some 6,179 AHOP mortgage renewals coming up in the region of Peel alone. The minister has promised to intervene personally in cases of severe hardship. Can he tell us what his plans are to deal with the AHOP owners who face increases from 8 per cent to 20 per cent on first mortgages, and to 19.75 per cent from nothing on second mortgages. All 6,179 will become due before April of 1982. Can the minister assure us that he will be able to handle all these cases when I refer them to him?

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, the implication of the hon. member's question is related to the undertaking I made in the House yesterday. I would point out, first of all, that I was talking about the interim period, until such time as the government's budget is presented to the House.

I would also indicate to him that last year, one month after assuming responsibility for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the first thing I did was to address the situation of those in AHOP who needed additional help. As a result of that, for the last two years we have given increased subsidies to those people under those programs. I recognize the difficulties they are facing. In light of the representation made by those people months ago, and knowing the difficulties they face, I can assure the hon. member that they are people who have been considered, and that forms part of my advice to the government.

ABANDONMENT OF AHOP HOUSES

Mr. John McDermid (Brampton-Georgetown): Madam Speaker, as usual the minister's answer does not solve the problem. I should like to ask him why he has not acted on the AHOP situation when the problems were brought to him well over a year and a half ago? I would advise him not to fall back in his answer on the handout offer of \$60 per month which he made to the AHOP people. That is a smokescreen, considering that 40 per cent of the units built in Peel, some 2,737, have already been abandoned as of July 31, 1981.

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, I would be repeating myself if I said that, one month after the difficulty of the AHOP owners was brought to my attention, the government moved to continue the original program which was designed to encourage and assist people of a particular income level to get into home ownership. We did that. I admit that the escalation of interest rates above 20 per cent within the last two months presents a much different picture. As the result of that I have looked at the situation, and have given advice to the government.

I would say to the hon. member that there is another problem with the AHOP program in some areas, and that is the de-escalation of property values. Sometimes this causes people to look at their situation and conclude that, if property values are not going to increase, irrespective of interest rates, they do not want to continue to try to build equity in a property. That is another reason why some people left those programs.

REGISTERED HOME OWNERSHIP PROGRAM

Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Public Works who is responsible for housing. Hundreds of young Canadians are today building a fund for their first home through the Registered Home Ownership Program, which has a maximum limit of \$10,000, with a maximum contribution of \$1,000 per year.