

rates, I do not remember him saying what he would do about it. If he did, he kept it pretty secret. I would like to know his opinion of what should be done also.

An hon. Member: Answer the question. You are the minister now.

Mr. Whelan: This week the Canadian Federation of Agriculture has been holding meetings in the capital of Canada. The federation has been meeting different groups, talking to politicians on both sides of the House, and making suggestions. We have asked this group to come forward with what it really thinks should be done. The federation wants to consult with us further. It wants to negotiate with us, etc. We would like to know what firm stand will be taken by different groups in western Canada on what they want, because I am sure the hon. member knows that there is a great difference of opinion on what should be done.

The opinions of western producers differ widely. Some say nothing should be done; some say this should be done; some say that should be done. Those proposals are being studied at the present time, but—

An hon. Member: Order.

Mr. Whelan:—this being such an important matter—it has been established for a great number of years—that when any change is being made it has to be the right one and provide equity for producers of livestock, feed grains and grain, and equity for the railroads, etc. So those are—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Mazankowski: Madam Speaker, there is a great difference of opinion flowing from the government, and I simply ask for some clarification. Is this troika plan which outlines three different policies designed to confuse or manipulate, or is the minister serious when he says that the debate has gone on long enough and that a resolution should be brought forward and put in place by August 1? Because there is a consensus emerging in western Canada through the western agriculture conference, which represents some 50 farm organizations, is the minister prepared to come forward and outline to the farmers what his government is prepared to do in terms of putting up funding to meet the Crow gap so that the debate can go on, and is the minister prepared to recommend to his cabinet a set of guidelines within which the debate can be advanced? The farmers have stated their position. Now it is up to the government to respond.

Mr. Whelan: Madam Speaker, the hon. member makes it sound quite simple, but he is forgetting the commodity sector from western Canada, which has made a different suggestion. He is forgetting the National Farmers' Union, which has made a different suggestion on what should be done—that we should not touch the Crowsnest Pass rates in any way whatsoever. The hon. member says there is a consensus. The western agriculture committee has made recommendations to us, but that alone is not good enough.

Oral Questions

An hon. Member: Where do you stand?

Mr. Whelan: We have had meetings this week, and some of the things said by some of the people differed slightly, and perhaps in a greater fashion than I am describing. They differ in a major fashion from what has been said in written presentations to us, so they have not formed that consensus the hon. member is saying they have, and when they do that, this government will act.

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HOUSING

REQUEST FOR EXPANSION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES PROGRAM

Mr. Robert Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the minister responsible for housing. The minister's response yesterday to the housing crisis in British Columbia, to the effect that housing starts were up, was small comfort indeed in view of the problems of 3,000 people on waiting lists to get into co-op housing. There are no available building lots. Average home prices are well over \$100,000.

In view of these shortages and in view of the heavy financial commitments which are brought upon home owners when they remortgage their homes at higher interest rates, will the minister reconsider his withdrawal of the community services program, recognize the special need of this rapid growth area of Canada, and implement another extended and accelerated community services program particularly for this rapid growth area of Canada?

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, the community services program was not designed to respond to the immediate needs defined by the hon. member. Rather, the response of the government last year, for example, in increasing the number of social units designated for immediate take-up, we believe, is a more useful response at the present time, and it is my hope as well that the lead of the federal government with the MURB program, which was followed by the province of Ontario with a program to build on top of that, will produce results much sooner and more directly in response to the problems which are experienced in the province now.

Mr. Wenman: Madam Speaker, representing the fastest growing communities in North America and representing also an area which has the potential for additional housing units in the Fraser Valley, I can tell the minister that there are no lots available, programs are not working, and demand is too high. The minister said he was removing this program to allow for new initiatives. The new initiatives have not worked. What are the initiatives the minister is planning specifically for this specific western problem which comes at this particular time in the development of our country? What new initiatives is the minister talking about, and what will he do to get the program going, not six months from now, but this month and next month?