

• (1450)

[English]

Hon. Alan Redway (Minister of State (Housing)): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear that the Hon. Member shares with me my concern and that of the Government with the housing crisis, the housing problems in Canada. He also shares the concern with the housing problems of low-income Canadians.

I think he will agree with me that the appointment by the Prime Minister of a Minister solely responsible for nothing but housing is an indication of the priority this Government places on the subject.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Redway: If the Hon. Member will cast his memory back to the last Speech from the Throne he will know that there was nothing in it with respect to the release of the Downsview Airport land either. In fact, it was released. We will be proceeding with other measures to improve housing for Canadians.

CONSTRUCTION OF HOUSES ON DOWNSVIEW SITE

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Minister will allow me to ask him a question about the Downsview lands.

On December 15 last this Minister, then a backbencher, asked a question in relation to housing on the Downsview site. It is not surprising that the answer coming from the then Minister was far from satisfactory. Therefore, will this Minister now give us a response to his original question which demonstrates the understanding and the compassion that the previous Minister was simply not capable of giving?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martin: Will he tell us the precise date upon which we will see housing being built on this site? Will he confirm that much more than 25 per cent of the site will be made available for affordable housing for seniors and the handicapped?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Alan Redway (Minister of State (Housing)): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the Hon. Member that we are proceeding as quickly as possible with the development of the site.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Redway: First, we are dealing with the Department of National Defence to shift the defence housing that is currently on the site on to another part of the site. Second, we are proceeding to put in place with the Municipality of North York a development agreement in

Oral Questions

order to put housing on the site just as quickly as we possibly can.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

VISIBLE MINORITIES—REQUEST THAT LEGISLATION BE AMENDED

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. On March 21 the Canadian Ethnocultural Council published a report indicating that the employment equity legislation was not working and that visible minorities are still seriously under-represented in major corporations under federal jurisdiction. The CEC studied 16 companies. Only three of these had acceptable records. A December report of her own Department made similar findings.

Considering that there has been an unfortunate increase in Canada of racial incidents in recent months will the Minister now agree to amend the employment equity legislation to apply sanctions against those firms which fail to obey the law?

[Translation]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): I want to thank the Hon. Member for his interest in a social measure our Government introduced in 1986. Ninety-six per cent of the companies affected by this measure have submitted their reports, which proves the measure was both important and necessary. However, need I remind the Hon. Member that since we are working with people, there is always room for improvement!

[English]

REQUEST THAT ALL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS BE INCLUDED IN LEGISLATION

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, that answer is totally unacceptable. Of course in the employment equity legislation the only thing the companies have to do is report. They do not have to show any progress. They really do not have to implement employment equity legislation. There should be sanctions in that legislation.

Another recent report shows that visible minorities are less than 1 per cent in federal government Departments when they should be more than 6 per cent. It is difficult for the Government to preach to the private sector when its own record is bad.