

Inquiries of the Ministry

which is not at all obvious to me, the minister may reply to the question.

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): I have met the mayor of Sherbrooke, Mr. Speaker, I have taken this matter into consideration.

[English]

HOUSING**DROPS IN NOVEMBER STARTS—INQUIRY AS TO NEW INITIATIVES**

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister without Portfolio in charge of housing. In view of the very serious drop in housing starts during the month of November to the seasonally adjusted rate of 179,000 housing units, and the growing concern that this may extend well into the future and destroy any chance of meeting housing needs, can the minister tell the House whether any new initiatives are being taken and whether it is the intention of the government to increase the funds available to help meet this need?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister without Portfolio): Mr. Speaker, the latest evidence indicates that we will hit in excess of 200,000 housing starts this year. All options open to the government are being examined with regard to the fulfilment of the statement in the Throne Speech, to wit, the achievement of one million housing starts in the next five years with special emphasis on low income housing.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, are we to assume from what the minister has said that the government does not propose to take any special measures to offset the very clear recession in housing starts which has settled in and is causing such concern to the home building industry and Canadians looking for homes?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest the question as asked is argumentative.

**DON VALE URBAN RENEWAL PROJECT,
TORONTO—DISCUSSIONS WITH CITY—
SUPPORT FOR PROGRAM**

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, in view of the apparent deadline of December 31, 1969 which will affect the Don Vale urban renewal project in the city of Toronto, can the minister state whether he has had any discussions with the city of

Toronto and whether the government is prepared to enter into an agreement to support that urban renewal program prior to December 31, 1969?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister without Portfolio): Mr. Speaker, when I met with residents representing the Don Vale urban renewal committee I made it quite clear that it was most unlikely we would be able to have legislation available because it would require the setting up of rehabilitation grants and loans inherent in their proposal. I made it quite clear to them, regretfully, that that was the situation and that this was unlikely to take place before December 31, 1969.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, as a result of the minister's statement made in Vancouver I am wondering whether those cities which received the last urban renewal grants can expect a Christmas present from the government prior to Christmas in order that they may pursue the urban renewal programs they have already started?

Mr. Andras: As I indicated in answer to several questions asked by hon. members in the House earlier, I will be making a statement regarding urban renewal before the Christmas recess I think.

Mr. Alexander: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, if I recall correctly, the minister indicated to the House that he was going to make a statement in respect of guidelines for urban renewal and public housing. My question is, if the minister will allow me to put it to him, does the government intend to allow the several municipalities which have started urban renewal projects to further them by giving them a Christmas present of further grants prior to Christmas?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is obviously a repetition of the question the hon. member originally raised.

**EFFECT OF CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY
UNEMPLOYMENT**

Mr. R. E. McKinley (Huron): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister without Portfolio how he can reconcile the fact of severe high unemployment in the construction industry with his hopes to complete the amount of housing necessary this year?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member's question is argumentative.