

by the employees. Would the Minister explain why that settlement was rejected by the Government, and would he now indicate that he is prepared to reverse that decision?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member would agree that that is a matter between the firefighters and the President of the Treasury Board who may wish to respond to it.

POSSIBILITY OF STRIKE

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Transport, who is responsible for the operation of the airports. Press reports indicate there is a possibility of using fire chiefs from across Canada to take over airports in case of a strike. Could the Minister tell us how he is going to get the fire chiefs into airports like Ottawa or Thunder Bay if the employees go out on strike? Will he fly them in without any airport fire protection?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, naturally if there is a strike Transport Canada will have to make the necessary contingency plans. I can assure the Hon. Member that that will be done in an orderly fashion.

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INTEREST ACT

PURPOSE OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey—White Rock—North Delta): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Finance. Several months ago the Minister responsible for CMHC indicated that there would be changes brought forward to the Interest Act. Would the Minister of State for Finance tell us what the Government has in mind, especially as it pertains to the interest of consumers?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to note that the Government has done a great deal for homeowners. We have seen average mortgage rates come down 2.75 per cent since the Government took office.

Ms. Copps: Answer the question.

Mrs. McDougall: The purpose of this Government is to promote further housing measures and to lower interest rates further, which are of benefit to the consumer.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Which memo are you reading now?

Mrs. McDougall: I have discussed the Interest Act with the housing industry, with my cabinet colleague, and with my provincial colleagues. We will be doing more for housing, including the Interest Act.

Oral Questions

FINANCE

MIDDLE-INCOME TAXPAYERS

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Finance. Since over 40,000 taxpayers felt strongly enough to write to a Toronto newspaper to protest the burden placed on middle-income Canadians by the Government's recent Budget, will the Minister tell the House why neither the Minister of the Finance nor any Minister of the Crown was willing to meet with representatives of this group today?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): First, let me point out, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Finance is representing this country with great honour at the OECD meetings in Paris.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): What about you?

Mrs. McDougall: Let me also point out that the great burden on the Canadian taxpayer is the average debt of \$38,000 per family brought about by the Party which the Hon. Member represents. Third, let me point out that when the Leader of that Party was the Minister of Finance, you could buy a house for half that amount.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER MEET REPRESENTATIVES

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, the Government is depending for its deficit reduction program on the taxes of those people whom the Minister is not willing to see. Surely it is worth while to see them and to hear their views on alternatives?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, the latest Budget that was brought out by my colleague, the Minister of Finance, reduced expenditures by \$3 for every \$1 increase in taxes.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Why don't you see these people?

Mrs. McDougall: What we have to do for this country is to get rid of that deficit which the Hon. Member's Party brought about.

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EXPO 86

EXPENDITURE OF FEDERAL FUNDS

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. Would the Minister explain to this House why all the federal moneys available for Expo 86 have been spent in Vancouver? Can he tell us why the federal Government has not provided any support in the other areas of British Columbia so that