

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the conclusion should not be drawn, because there is no reference in the Speech from the Throne, that there will not be legislation dealing with this subject.

Mr. Lewis: This is why I am asking the question.

Mr. Hellyer: I should like to answer it if the hon. member will give me the opportunity. The task force which is beginning its work in Ottawa on Monday will, I hope, report to the Canadian people and to the government of Canada by the end of the year. It is my expectation that following this report legislation will be introduced in parliament, probably in the latter part of this session but hopefully in time to have some influence on next year's construction program.

Mr. Lewis: Will the minister inform the house whether the object of the task force, which I understand from press reports he is heading, is to find some solution to the problem or for the minister to indicate to the people coming before it what his solutions are?

Mr. Hellyer: I am sure my hon. friend would not be so lacking in charity as to believe that this inquiry is not a genuine search for the facts related to this very serious problem in our country, and also to obtain from all interested parties everywhere in Canada all of the ideas they may have in respect of possible solutions. This is the purpose of the task force. If in the process I can make any contributions, along with the other members of the task force, the hon. member can be assured I shall be happy to do so.

Mr. Lewis: May I ask a further supplementary question? In view of the many inquiries undertaken and reports published over the years on this problem, will the minister be kind enough to inform the house what areas of facts he is so ignorant about that he requires a further task force?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the minister about the studies conducted by his predecessor in this field. Is there no information available from these studies that could assist the minister in arriving at a decision on this subject?

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the minister whether he is making any plans, prior to receiving the report of the task force to which reference has been made, to alleviate the very urgent housing situation in Canada, and particularly with regard to the possibility of funds being made available for the conversion of old homes into emergency housing units?

Mr. Hellyer: Every effort is being made to increase the supply of housing, which in the long run is going to be the best solution to the housing crisis. I am sure the hon. member will be pleased to know that the anticipated rate of production this year is going to exceed the government's goal of 175,000 units and may go as high as 185,000 units. This is a step in the right direction, and it includes the whole range of construction from apartment buildings to single family units, reconversions and so on. I think we are making giant steps forward but the need is great and there is more to be done.

[Later:]

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport who is also in charge of housing. Is anything being done about the housing crisis that is facing university students? As the house knows, this is a very serious problem all across Canada, especially at this time of year. Is anything specific being done in this connection?

Mr. Hellyer: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation is making loans in the amount of millions of dollars for this purpose.

Mr. Nystrom: A supplementary question. Could the minister indicate whether any students have camped on his lawn in the past few days?

Mr. Hellyer: Many of them.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS**BREAD—REQUEST FOR STEPS TO PREVENT PRICE INCREASE**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Has the minister taken or does he propose to take any steps to prevent an increase in the price of bread to Canadian consumers, who are already overburdened by high food costs