

Urgency of Housing Debate

was the federal contribution, in total, and by program, in each province for the fiscal year 1964-65?

Return tabled.

Mr. Aiken: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have been unable to find starred question No. 277 on the order paper. Could we have the number of the question which has been answered today?

Mr. Bécharde: It is question No. 277.

• (3:10 p.m.)

HOUSING**STEPS TO MEET REPORTED CRISIS—MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 26**

Mr. G. L. Chatterton (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to move the adjournment of the house for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance under standing order 26. The matter to which I refer would be contained within the motion, if leave is granted. The matter is:

—the deepening of the grave crisis in the house construction industry as the result of the government's failure to provide the necessary funds;

the government's persistent failure to establish priorities in meeting the needs of citizens generally;

the increasing serious lack of housing accommodation, particularly for most low income families; the alarming increase in the cost of housing created by the shortage of accommodation and aggravated by the government's policy of retaining the 11 per cent sales tax on building materials;

and the resultant disruptive effects on the retention of specialized and skilled labour in the building industry.

Mr. Speaker: Would the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich kindly enlighten the Chair and the house on the question of urgency of debate? I take the liberty to caution the hon. member and others who might want to participate in the consideration of the matter of urgency that what is before the house at the moment is the question of urgency of debate, not urgency of the subject matter of the proposed motion.

Mr. Chatterton: Mr. Speaker, I shall try conscientiously to restrict my remarks to the question of urgency of debate. I shall try very hard not to infringe the rules. We had all expected, and I know a great number of Canadians across the country and the building industry had expected this, that today the Prime Minister or the Minister of Labour would rise on motions and make a statement with regard to the serious question that arises in the country in respect of the housing shortage.

[Mr. Davis.]

This has not been done, in spite of the fact that since the house rose 11 weeks ago a large number of organizations have made representations to the government on this important matter. Also, during this time the Economic Council has submitted its fourth annual review. According to that review it would seem that this year something between 180,000 and 190,000 new housing units will be required. It would also appear from estimates I have been able to obtain that there will be a shortage this year alone of something between 30,000 and 40,000 housing units.

The second point I make in support of urgency of debate of the question is that it is now 11 weeks since the house rose. During this time there has been ample evidence of the rapid increase in the cost of housing, an increase occasioned largely by the shortage of housing caused by government policies. Because there are several buyers for the same house, the cost of the house has gone up very considerably. In the Toronto area, for example, I have one estimate that the cost of an average new house has gone up by over \$5,000 in the past year.

The Dominion Bureau of Statistics indicates that between August 1966 and August 1967 the consumer price index for housing, which includes shelter and housing operation, increased from 145 to 152.2. This is an increase of 7.2 points in the cost of housing over the past year ending in August. Yet we have had no opportunity in the past 11 weeks to discuss this matter.

The third point I put before the house with regard to the question of urgency is that in spite of the clear warnings of the Economic Council in its previous reports and in its most recent, fourth annual review—some of the comments being almost startling, in spite of the reserved language used by the Economic Council—there is nothing on the order paper which will provide a vehicle for members of the house to discuss this matter which is reaching catastrophic proportions, namely the shortage of housing and the high cost of housing.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chatterton: I am sure it is a matter of the gravest disappointment to millions of Canadians that there is no clear proposal by the government to solve or even ameliorate this question. During the past 11 weeks we have read statements made by the Minister of Labour, who I am sorry is not in the