

*Oral Questions*POSITION OF FUND—REASON FOR DELAY IN REPORT OF
ADVISORY COUNCIL—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, if I may ask a general question about unemployment insurance in order to elicit some information from the minister. I wonder if the minister can advise the House whether the fund to which employers and employees contribute is running at a deficit and, if so, by how much?

● (1530)

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, these figures will be available to all hon. members in due course. I will be making a statement on this matter in the not too distant future.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Elgin.

Mr. Alexander: A supplementary question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Alexander: Can the minister assure the House—

Mr. Speaker: May we have order, please. The Chair undertook a moment ago to recognize the hon. member for Elgin, which I have done. I will return to the hon. member in a moment if he will allow me to do so.

[Later:]

Mr. Alexander: Can the Minister of Manpower and Immigration inform the House when he will be making the statement? I hope it will be in the not too distant future. Will he touch on the entire cost, including the administrative cost of the fund? Also, will he touch on the fact that, as he indicated before, the administrative cost will not exceed \$145 million? Will he give some reason why the advisory council has not submitted its second report as it is certainly very instrumental in seeing what happened with the Unemployment Insurance Commission? Can he give us that assurance so that he will make a clean breast—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Alexander: This is an extremely important matter. The minister was about to stand and answer the question.

Mr. Speaker: Will the hon. member please resume his seat. The minister will be recognized for the purpose of answering the question.

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, I will be very glad to examine all facets of the hon. member's representations and do my best, as the hon. member says, to carry out what I hope I have always carried out, that is making a clean breast of things.

[Mr. Speaker.]

URBAN AFFAIRS

DATE OF LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE TO MUNICIPALITIES FOR RAILWAY
RELOCATION

Mr. John Wise (Elgin): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. Will the minister inform the House as to the date on which he intends or will be able to introduce his bill to provide financial assistance to urban municipalities for railroad relocations?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I hope the Minister of Transport will be able to introduce that bill some time in the month of November. We have completed all of the processes required for introduction of the bill and we are simply waiting for the drafting to be completed.

LAND ASSEMBLY PROGRAM—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE
NO WINDFALL PROFITS FOR PRIVATE SPECULATION AND
NO RESALE TO PRIVATE SECTOR

Mr. Ed Nelson (Burnaby-Seymour): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of State for Urban Affairs arising out of the tri-level conference in Edmonton and the emphasis given to the federal government's land assembly program. What arrangements will be made in establishing the purchase price of land assembled under the program to ensure that federal funds for land assembly will not simply amount to windfall profits for private speculators at the expense of taxpayers?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I certainly give the hon. member that assurance. That, of course, is obviously not the purpose of public intervention in land assembly. The proposal will be to dispose of the land in public land assemblies, either by way of sale or lease at below market rates and assign certain parts of it to low income housing. If lands are sold at market or close to market prices, that element of profit will not be returned to the government, as has been the case in the past. It will be applied within the land assembly for the provision of municipal community services, taking that cost off the municipality involved and thereby making public land assembly more attractive to municipalities.

Mr. Nelson: Can the minister assure the House that land acquired under the program will not be sold back to the private sector, but will be held or made available for leasehold arrangements?

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, the land will be disposed of by either sale or lease. I am hopeful we can do a good deal of leasing to show the value of that technique in lowering the price of land and housing. However, I think it would be unwise, especially because these are federal-provincial relationships, to make an unequivocal commitment that there will be no sales.