

Oral Questions

Minister of Finance to our housing needs, is the minister prepared to stand by his early prediction of a minimum of 210,000 housing starts in 1975?

Mr. Danson: Mr. Speaker, I think I should point out that in the entire budget the housing allocation was the largest single item for this year—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Danson:—plus the very significant non-budgetary items and the increase in the subsidy portion. I still hope for the minimum figure of 210,000 housing starts, but I think it will be very difficult to reach. I am hopeful that the subsidy program will work better, but I do not want to lose sight of that target in the present circumstances. We will have a difficult time making it, but I like to keep my sights high, as does the government, and I hope we will make it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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[Translation]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

KIDNAPPING OF MRS. BLANCHET IN SHERBROOKE—REQUEST FOR CO-OPERATION OF FORCE

Mr. Irénée Pelletier (Sherbrooke): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the Solicitor General.

Following Mrs. Blanchet's kidnapping yesterday in Sherbrooke where the kidnappers demand \$1 million in ransom, could the Solicitor General reassure the House and the Eastern Townships population that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police will help other police forces in the area so that Mrs. Blanchet may be found?

[English]

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, under ordinary circumstances this matter would be the responsibility of the Quebec police, but if they approach the RCMP, the RCMP will be pleased to co-operate.

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INCOME TAX

ENTITLEMENT OF PURCHASERS OF GASOLINE TO INCOME TAX DEDUCTION AS WELL AS REBATE OF EXCISE TAX

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Revenue and ask him whether he could confirm the truth of the statement made by a spokesman for his department that all persons purchasing gasoline who can claim an expense deduction in calculating income tax will also be eligible for a refund on the ten cents a gallon excise tax.

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, those entitled to the refund will be governed by the legislation to be introduced very shortly.

Mr. Orlikow: Does that mean in fact that a doctor, a lawyer or a self-employed businessman will be able to get

[Miss MacDonald.]

a refund on the ten cent a gallon excise tax, while a worker who has to drive 20 or 30 miles to work and the same number of miles back and who cannot deduct anything for travelling expenses, will not be able to get the refund on the excise tax?

Mr. Speaker: I appreciate, as I am sure all hon. members do, the importance and the impact of the question. However, this does not alter the fact that the hon. member is seeking an opinion from the minister on what will be in the legislation.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

REQUEST FOR EXPLANATION OF ADVERTISEMENT IN "GLOBE AND MAIL" RELATING TO SALE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR TO ARGENTINA

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, two minutes ago the Secretary of State for External Affairs said that Canada had not sold a nuclear reactor to Argentina. What explanation does he have for the advertisement in the *Globe and Mail* issue of Saturday, June 21, by Atomic Energy Commission of Canada reading in part as follows:

Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) in a joint venture, is building a nuclear power station in the province of Cordoba in Argentina and is currently recruiting for professional engineers and engineering support personnel as outlined below:

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I apologize for the words that I may have used. Perhaps I should explain that the contract is subject to the conclusion of the necessary safeguards.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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POST OFFICE

POSSIBLE REVIEW OF RURAL MAIL CARRIERS' CONTRACTS IN VIEW OF BUDGETARY MEASURES

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Postmaster General somewhat related to a question posed by the hon. member for Winnipeg North. Will an adjustment be made to the contracts of the rural mail carriers who have had their contracts substantially discounted as a result of last Monday's budget?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, these contracts are under review in light of unexpected expenses—

Mr. Fairweather: As part of the cabinet you could have expected those expenses.

Mr. Mackasey:—expenses that sometimes occur, and we would want to review them in that light.