

Oral Questions

equipment, when will the Postmaster General bring in amendments to the Post Office Act to remedy this injustice? Of course, it is aggravated by continuing inflation, and amendments were promised by his predecessor when he appeared before the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications last May 5.

Hon. J.-Gilles Lamontagne (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I have received many inquiries concerning the \$10,000 limit with regard to rural contracts for delivering mail. I know these people are suffering because of inflation and other costs. At the moment, we are trying to revise all these contracts, but unfortunately the limit set by the Post Office Act is \$10,000. Probably we will have to pass an amendment to the Post Office Act in the future in an attempt to give justice to these people.

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Speaker, because of the importance of this issue, as was emphasized by the Postmaster General, and while there is yet time, will the hon. minister introduce amendments to the Post Office Act not only to resolve this particular injustice but also to legalize rate increases and deal with the many other urgent amendments which must be made to the Post Office Act if the Post Office Department is to get back on the road to recovery?

Mr. Lamontagne: Mr. Speaker, the Post Office Department is already back on the road to recovery. According to the last statistics, it is getting better in many parts of the country.

An hon. Member: Not in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Lamontagne: Perhaps that is an exception.

Mr. Dinsdale: What about Toronto?

Mr. Lamontagne: I can tell the hon. member that there are many things to be amended in the Post Office Act. I think we will see revisions carried out in due time.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS

REQUEST WAR DISABILITY PENSION BE RAISED TO LEVEL OF 1973 FORMULA—DISREPAIR OF VETERANS HOMES

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my question is really supplementary to the one asked by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. I hope I can frame the question so that the Minister of Veterans Affairs will not use the word "consideration" in his reply. The minister is aware that a committee is studying the basic rate of pension in the 48 per cent widows' inequity. Can the minister give some hope to the veterans of the country by indicating what progress is being made by this committee, and when we can expect a decision?

Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would prefer not to be that precise today. The study is progressing quite rapidly.

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

Mr. Marshall: Mr. Speaker, dealing with another glaring inequity, can the minister indicate what progress has been made with regard to the submission of the provincial command of the Canadian Legion in Newfoundland which did a survey and came up with 4,000 deteriorated homes which require repairs? A commitment was made three or four years ago that a pilot project would be done so that the project would spread across the country. Can the minister give a definite commitment now to providing those funds? Can he indicate what progress has been made? What is his answer?

Mr. MacDonald (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, considerable progress has been made. As the hon. member knows, last year all communities in Newfoundland with fewer than 2,500 residents were designated for rural RRAP. Certain areas will receive higher priority than others. Now that the budget for this program is \$3 million, which is ten times that of the 1976-1977 budget, I understand there has been an appreciable increase in applications for assistance under the program. RRAP is capable of meeting the needs of veterans in most areas. Hon. members of the House should recall that when areas are designated, it is done by the provinces. Thus, this program is progressing considerably. I have spoken to my colleague, the Minister of State for Urban Affairs, and everything possible is being done at this time.

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URBAN AFFAIRS

REQUEST NEWLY-FORMED MUNICIPALITIES IN QUEBEC BE ELIGIBLE FOR RRAP ASSISTANCE

Mr. Alexandre Cyr (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Urban Affairs.

First of all, I wish to express to the minister the House's satisfaction for the "sugary" victory he has won this week. He has been advised that several municipalities in the Gaspé area had applied for their designations under RRAP. Will he make public shortly the names of the Quebec communities which will be designated in the new agreement which will be signed with the Quebec government and which will make it possible for a larger number of municipalities to benefit from RRAP?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I shall be shortly in a position to announce that all small municipalities in the province of Quebec will be designated for RRAP purposes. The current discussions with the Quebec government have been very successful. The Quebec government has indicated its desire that all small municipalities should be designated, and we are indeed delighted that it went along with our suggestion.