

*Oral Questions***HOUSING****GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO IMPROVE NATIVE AND RURAL HOUSING PROGRAM—NATIVE REPRESENTATION AT VANCOUVER HABITAT CONFERENCE**

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of State for Urban Affairs whether he can report to the House on what plans the corporation might have to accelerate the native and rural housing program implemented two years ago which to date has achieved less than one per cent of its target?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the hon. member gets his figures, but two years ago the figure of starts in that whole area was something like 42. I recall indicating to hon. members how much of an effort it was to get the program started. The most recent figures I have are 3500, and if we maintain this level of acceleration of activity I think we will be doing a great deal along the line of reaching our target. I have been meeting with the native people just this past week. This has a high priority in my ministry and in CMHC. We are working well with the native people. It has been much slower getting going than we expected, but I think with that rate of acceleration we are making good progress. We are running into problems of administration but those are better than problems of frustration.

Mr. Oberle: Mr. Speaker, the figures I have quoted in the House of 50,000 homes come from a report from the minister's own department. The houses that have been started and achieved to date are 410. I should like to ask the minister if it is his intention, and the intention of his department, to allow native people to establish a presence during the Habitat conference at Vancouver since it only takes a 15 by 20 piece of property to demonstrate a native housing unit in Canada?

Mr. Danson: Mr. Speaker, on the first part of the question, which is really not a question, certainly I do not know what part of the program he is referring to, but the total impact is on 3500 housing units. In so far as Habitat is concerned, the native people will be represented in the Canadian delegation.

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MANPOWER**LOCAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM—POSSIBILITY OF INCREASES IN FUNDING**

Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration and is in reference to media reports over the weekend regarding statements allegedly made by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce regarding the future of LIP funding. May I ask the hon. minister how soon he may be in a position to announce further LIP funding because of the high unemployment rate, especially in the Atlantic provinces, and with particular reference to Cape Breton Island where it is now in excess of 25 per cent?

[Mr. Andras.]

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I can hold out no hopes to the hon. member for increases in the allocation of \$100 million that is committed for 1976-77. I have indicated to the House, and confirm again, that this is a slight reduction in the allocation from \$135 million. There will be an increasing shift of these funds to the high unemployment areas. This may be at the expense of lower unemployment rated constituencies, but the figure is to remain at \$100 million on the basis of the information I have as of today.

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FINANCE**REGISTERED RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLAN—REQUEST FOR CHANGES TO PROVIDE GREATER FLEXIBILITY**

Mr. Bill Clarke (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. This is the time of year when many Canadians are examining registered retirement savings plans, and my question concerns the rule that requires a life annuity to be purchased before the 71st birthday, often resulting in no increase in cash income over the interest that could be earned on existing investments, resulting in the depletion of the estate on death and leaving the unused capital in the hands of the insurance companies. Will the minister give consideration to amendments which would permit registered retirement savings plans to retain existing investments and to be depleted at will, providing of course that the amounts taken out would be included in income in the year of receipt, in order to provide greater flexibility and to remove inequities that exist at the moment?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the operation of this particular program has been under scrutiny. Of course, any change of that kind involving a change in fiscal status would very likely have to be made in the context of a budget.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS**PENSIONS FOR FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR—REASON FOR DELAY IN IMPLEMENTATION**

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. In view of the fact it would cost only about \$9 million a year to provide the pensions for prisoners of war recommended in the Seventh Report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, and in view of the fact that the government has spent sums many times that size, in quite a few cases, since the restraint program was brought in last October, would the Minister of Veterans Affairs give us the assurance that it is not a problem of finding \$9 million that is delaying action on this report regarding POW legislation?

Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as far as the question is concerned, when I finally have the conclusions of the government I