

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Mackasey:** No, Mr. Speaker. This is a matter of judgment. I could easily judge that the hon. member is trying to make political hay out of an embarrassing situation. People are bound to be hurt by strikes and this has never been denied. It depends on the value you place on democracy, and I place a greater value on it than the hon. member does.

STRIKE OF INSIDE WORKERS—PROPOSED DEBATE ON  
GOVERNMENT'S POSITION

**Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West):** Mr. Speaker, may I direct my question to the Acting Prime Minister? Notwithstanding what the Postmaster General just said, since neither the Postmaster General nor the postal union will protect the public interest, will the Acting Prime Minister bring the government's position before the House for debate as soon as possible, since parliament is the last refuge of the public interest?

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with the premise of the question posed by the hon. member. I believe the Postmaster General is acting in the public interest, and I think public support justifies my statement. There will be opposition days when the official opposition can put down a motion of this kind, if they wish.

**Mr. Alexander:** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I do not accept the Acting Prime Minister's answer. It appears that the Postmaster General is playing games at the expense of the public. The strike has continued for 25 days, millions of dollars have been lost and small businesses are affected adversely. Does the Acting Prime Minister not think that the public interest and the maintenance of essential services take precedence over the myth of collective bargaining as practised by the Post Office and the theatrics of the Postmaster General?

**Mr. Sharp:** Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister said and the Postmaster General confirmed, this is a question of judgment. I think it is very much in the public interest for the union involved to make the offer made by the Postmaster General and the Treasury Board available to its members, for voting. I think that would be the more democratic way of dealing with this issue. Unfortunately, so far that has not been the view of the union leaders. I think they should be given time to reflect.

**Mr. Alexander:** At the expense of the public.

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HOUSING

ALLEGATION NO HOUSES BUILT UNDER AHOP PROGRAM IN  
TORONTO THIS YEAR—GOVERNMENT ACTION

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby):** Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs arises from the report on housing published yesterday in the city of Toronto. According to that report, not a single housing unit was built in Toronto under the AHOP program for the second year in a row. In addition, the limited dividend program has been largely ignored by private

[Mr. Clarke (Vancouver Quadra).]

developers. Considering that the minister's so-called new AHOP program amounts to simply tinkering with some of the details, how does he expect the housing needs of the people in that and other cities to be met in the coming months?

**Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, figures in my files indicate that some 832 units were built in Toronto under AHOP between January and September of this year. I think that is pretty good. We want to see an even better record in the coming year with the new program. With regard to the limited dividend program, I am sorry that I do not have the figures with me. However, it has been a considerable success in Toronto. Indeed, a high percentage of the rental accommodation being built in the Toronto region is on the assisted rental program. We want to see an increase in that as well.

**Mr. Broadbent:** I suggest with respect that the minister has probably confused the figures of metro Toronto with the city of Toronto.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Broadbent:** That is not an insignificant distinction, and I think the minister would agree. I am basing my statements on the report of the city of Toronto. During the first nine months of this year, only 1,068 units were started in the city of Toronto as a result of the initiative provided by the private sector. In the province of Saskatchewan, in particular, where there has been the greatest success compared with other provinces in meeting housing needs, a shift has been made to the non-profit sector. The city of Toronto, for example, has been appealing for assistance in the non-profit sector. Why, then, does the government not do more for non-profit housing?

**Mr. Danson:** I can understand the leader of the NDP dreaming of Saskatchewan all the time, but the fact is we are working closely with the city of Toronto and the province of Ontario in trying to accelerate non-profit programs. There have been some delays, but some very active consultations have been going on. The fact remains that construction in the major cities for new residential accommodation has not reached the level we would like. Naturally, such construction has taken place where there has been more land available. We fully expect that our new program, with the incentives to higher density forms of housing and lower cost housing, will indeed encourage construction, if not right in the core, in the major cities. This will be medium density and in some cases high density housing. It will make the best use of the land and the city will receive a \$1,000 grant per unit built under that program. I think it will assist the city of Toronto and, indeed, many other municipalities across this country.

EFFECT OF LAND SPECULATION ON HOUSING COSTS—  
GOVERNMENT ACTION

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby):** Has the minister had a chance to look at the report prepared by Mr. Lorrimer on the effect of land speculation in the metro-Toronto region? He has estimated that some 24 per cent of the average price of a new housing unit in metro-Toronto during the past year is as a result of profits from land