

this country, and when the draw down by the builders begins I think the hon. lady will see some results. In the current economic cycle, I feel that the budgetary response was the appropriate one.

POSSIBILITY OF FISCAL MEASURES TO STIMULATE
APARTMENT CONSTRUCTION

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Obviously there is some difference of view between the Minister of Finance and the minister of urban affairs as to what this infusion of funds will contribute. Given the crucial shortage of apartment units and the continuing decline in starts in this area, and given CMHC's own admission that developers in many parts of the country benefit more from investing in Canada savings bonds than in apartment construction, is the minister prepared to introduce specific fiscal measures to stimulate apartment construction and thus head off the impending catastrophe in rental accommodation predicted for next year?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, there was already in the budget, and in previous measures, a good deal of stimulus given to rental units. The hon. lady ought not to suggest there is any conflict between my colleague and myself because he is a tremendous advocate for the housing sector in this country.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hees: And I suppose you are a great finance minister, John.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Thank you. My responsibility is to recognize priorities and to reconcile them with other initiatives taken by the government in a way which is within the economic capacity of this country.

* * *

HOUSING

REQUEST FOR REVISED PROJECTION OF STARTS FOR 1975

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the remark of the Minister of Finance I wonder whether the minister of urban affairs is now prepared to give the House a revised projection of starts for 1975, particularly in view of the fact that the minister has never been backward in citing statistics when he felt that they were favourable.

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, that is only because most statistics have been favourable. I do not think I would like to make a specific projection at this time because the budgetary measures, particularly the enrichment of the subsidy to the interest program, have not had an opportunity to take effect. We still consider the figure of 210,000 the net replacement figure. As I said before, it is good to keep our sights aimed as high as possible. If there is a shortfall we will suffer that with some regret in a very tough economic

Oral Questions

situation, but we are going to do all in our power to make sure that we get to the root of the problem.

* * *

FINANCE

REQUEST FOR FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE ON
FINANCING OF HOSPITALIZATION AND MEDICAL CARE

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Finance. In view of the fact that the drive of the government of Ontario to get tax transfer arrangements in place of not being in cost-sharing programs may lead this country to a game of brinkmanship over medicare and hospitalization in which the people of the smaller provinces will all suffer, is the minister prepared to reconsider his unilateral position and convene a conference of the provinces to have a fresh, open discussion of the whole question of how to finance hospitalization and medical care?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome the hon. member back to the House after what must have been an unendurably long weekend.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1420)

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): I should like to say to him that we have had a series of federal-provincial conferences on the financing of hospitalization, medical care and post-secondary education programs. The recent move by the province of Ontario recalls an initiative my colleague, now the House leader and then the Minister of Finance, made to the provinces in 1964-1966 whereby tax points were offered the provinces in return for their undertaking to finance certain programs, and we regret at that time Ontario was one of the first provinces to turn it down.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, in view of the indication from most of the provinces that they would like to find ways and means to curtail the rising cost of health and medical care, will the minister not reconsider discussing the whole matter with them before he imposes his unilateral limits.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, whether or not we can accept the hon. gentleman's view as to timing, obviously discussion will be needed in the general area of cost-sharing programs in order to arrive at some mutually acceptable way to keep the rising expenses within the growth of the economy.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, in view of the admission by the minister that discussions will be necessary, will he not make those discussions real by withdrawing his unilateral dictum.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, the discussions have been real over a period of at least five years.