

Oral Questions

Members of Parliament on all sides of the House to have made some attempt individually and shown some effort to assist people by contacting the mortgage holder. In referring items to me, I would appreciate it if Members of Parliament could assist by identifying the mortgage holder, the date, and the person whom they contacted in an attempt to assist, before referring the matter to me.

I will therefore have to return these newspaper clippings that were given by the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain. They do not illustrate the question of genuine hardship. Indeed, on a number of the newspaper clippings where the question is asked, "Will the new monthly payments force your family to move or rethink your budget," there is no answer to that question. Therefore I have no indication that the questions are genuine.

CASE OF INDIVIDUAL AHOP HOME OWNER

Hon. Bill Jarvis (Perth): Madam Speaker, the minister will already have received the petitions tabled by the Leader of the Opposition last week. I would not expect that the minister's answer yesterday would lead Canadian home owners to believe that the only access they have to the minister is necessarily through a Member of Parliament. I hope the minister was not implying that.

● (1120)

If he wants a specific example, may I ask the minister to explain why, this morning, his office, and the official designated presumably by his receptionist, did not return five telephone calls from Carol Rogmans, head of a single parent family, and an AHOP purchaser, whose CMHC payments eight days from now will increase from \$294 a month to \$652 a month? After leaving five unanswered messages, she telephoned the office of the Leader of the Opposition where, I assure him, there is a genuine concern for people like Mrs. Rogmans. Is there, in fact, a mechanism for people like this Canadian? Or was yesterday's answer simply a grandstand play to save the minister's political skin?

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): I answered that question in my first answer. I indicated I wanted the Members of Parliament to illustrate a genuine concern and to give me the background, the particulars of the case, the mortgage holder, the attempts, the demonstration that the member says he has just shown me in helping people. Members of Parliament have a responsibility to Canadians, as I do. I expect you to help Canadians, as I am attempting to help Canadians.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

REQUEST FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

Hon. Bill Jarvis (Perth): What can a member do if a minister will not reply, with all his staff and officials, to five phone calls from someone in a desperate situation like this? I

do not want the minister to think I am angry; I am outraged. But that is not going to help people like this; my outrage is not going to help these 800 Canadian families. I should like to ask the minister most seriously, will he consent to a House order later this day, establishing a special committee of the House of Commons, adequately staffed, with full facilities, to commence work this week to respond to the plight of Canadians like Carol Rogmans? Will he consent to that later today?

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Since the middle of August, Madam Speaker, I have indicated I have been attempting to respond to individual cases. I have met with large groups of people submitting petitions on their own behalf and on behalf of other Canadians. I have met with representatives of the industry. I have given advice to the government. More than that, yesterday I offered that if Members of Parliament, in using all of their personal resources, the resources that the Government of Canada and this Parliament gives to them, after using all of the resources of individual members, are unable to get any help from the mortgage holders, who are the people who have the major financial responsibility, my office will attempt to respond to individual Members of Parliament. I expect something more than just a phone call, and something more than just the press clippings that are produced to me, like this one, without any details whatsoever. That is not a genuine attempt.

RENT INCREASES FACING TENANTS

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): My question is also addressed to the minister responsible for housing. The consumer price index shows that tenants are facing the largest rent increases in ten years, and that the worst is yet to come. With vacancy rates at zero in some centres, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation warns that the average Canadian tenant looking for accommodation in new buildings may face rent increases of 100 per cent over current levels in the next 18 months. In view of the minister's offer to aid personally home owners faced with mortgage renewals, what system does the minister propose to aid tenants hit by sky high rent increases? Will the same opportunities for ministerial assistance to cases brought forward by MPs be extended to tenants as well as property owners?

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): In answer to a number of members I indicated my concern about tenants. In addition to reviewing the problem of rollover situations, I have given advice to the government about the difficulty facing the rental sector, as well as home owners. That advice has been given to the government. When the government presents its total financial plan, its budget to this House of Commons, you will have the opportunity to see what is the government's response.

In addition to that, this government, unlike the previous government, moved to do something about the tight rental situation by giving, for example, tax credits to encourage the construction of new rental accommodation, to take the pressure off the market so as to alleviate the price in the rental