

## HOUSING

ESTABLISHMENT OF DEBT MORATORIUM BOARD—  
GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg-Assiniboine):** Madam Speaker, last Wednesday we heard the Minister of Finance say he was ready to aid those people facing foreclosure because of abnormally high interest rates. I would ask the minister responsible for housing whether he has considered establishing a debt moratorium board similar to the one set up in the 1930s by the federal government? Such a board could aid bona fide applicants reduce their monthly payments, extend payment periods, and generally help slowdown the unacceptable present day home eviction rate. This legislation would also make banks readjust their loan payment schedules.

**Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works):** Madam Speaker, only in a peripheral way have we considered that request. I would think our response should be that under present circumstances, with the housing industry regenerated and very active in addressing supply, with supply eventually affecting affordability, we think that measure is not warranted.

## INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

**Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg-Assiniboine):** Madam Speaker, I would address my supplementary question to the Acting Minister of Finance. Has the acting minister or the Minister of Finance given any thought to introducing legislation, as was introduced in the 1930s by the federal and provincial governments, to assist individuals having problems with their mortgages? This legislation would require banks and lending institutions to readjust loan payments due to the 20 per cent interest rate which is causing record business bankruptcies. This readjustment of monthly loan payments could help reduce the business sector's extremely high bankruptcy rate.

[Translation]

**Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of State (Finance)):** Madam Speaker, that is a suggestion which the Minister of Finance may want to study closely and which he might consider when preparing the next budget.

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● (1425)

[English]

## THE ECONOMY

## WEEKEND MEETING OF CABINET

**Mr. Bob Rae (Broadview-Greenwood):** Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister I should like to address a question to the Acting Prime Minister having to do with the meeting of cabinet which took place on the weekend.

## Oral Questions

After the meeting the Minister of Finance indicated that there were no new measures being contemplated by the government to deal with the problem of inflation and that any economic measures would have to wait until the fall. How can the minister justify that kind of systematic inactivity when we have so many increasing problems of bankruptcies facing farmers, when we have problems of bankruptcies facing small businessmen, and when we have a crisis in the housing industry across the country? How can the government possibly justify that kind of inactivity?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, I understand that the question posed by a distinguished member of the press was whether the Minister of Finance intended to bring in a mini budget in the coming days. Apparently the answer was that there was not such an intention but, of course, the Minister of Finance will continue to make statements on the state of the economy, as he did over the weekend at the convention in Saskatoon which chose such a good, young and dynamic leader for the Liberal party in Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Rae:** Madam Speaker, the minister may have had an amusing time in Saskatchewan. The minister may have had an amusing time at Meach Lake, but millions of Canadians are not having a very amusing time because of the government's policies and because of the problems inflation and high interest rates are causing the average Canadian.

## INQUIRY CONCERNING GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

**Mr. Bob Rae (Broadview-Greenwood):** Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, and quite apart from statements, will the acting minister indicate whether the government intends to bring in any programs which will provide relief to farmers, to small businessmen and to home owners, prior to the summer?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, the meeting at Meach Lake yesterday was not an amusing meeting in the sense that few jokes were made. It was a very serious meeting, and the problem of inflation particularly was well reviewed. The Minister of Finance or the Prime Minister will be here later on this afternoon and, if they care to, they will answer in more detail the question raised by the hon. member. Obviously I am not in a position to do that at this time.

**Mr. Rae:** Madam Speaker, when 30 clowns are put together, I am sure there is bound to be an amusing time.

## COST OF LIVING TAX CREDIT

**Mr. Bob Rae (Broadview-Greenwood):** Madam Speaker, my final supplementary question has to do with the fact that on Friday the industrial wage figures for the year were released by Statistics Canada. Those figures showed that the wages of an average worker in Newfoundland fell some \$700