

Oral Questions

FINANCE

INTENTIONS RESPECTING PROPOSED MORTGAGE CREDIT PLAN

Mr. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I also have a question for the Minister of Finance, who is enjoying his small deficits. In view of the fact that since his government came to power the carrying costs on a \$60,000 mortgage have gone up by \$1,500, which totally cancels out any benefits under his proposed mortgage credit plan, is the minister prepared to withdraw that plan and revise and amend it so that we will have a plan which will reduce mortgage interest rates so that Canadians can buy homes?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman suggests a unique solution: mortgage interest rates have gone up, so take away the benefit that we are offering the people of Canada under the mortgage interest deduction plan and make it more difficult for them. No, we are certainly not going to withdraw that. We are carrying on, and there are 3,800,000 households in this country which are delighted with that plan.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Axworthy: Is the minister prepared to meet with his friends and associates in the residential construction industry who state that increased interest rates will result in a total depression in the construction industry, that they have total disregard for his mortgage credit plan, and therefore will he be prepared to withdraw it when his friends and associates tell him to?

● (1500)

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to meet with any group at any time and commiserate with them at the dismal record of the last ten years which has brought them to this state and which has forced mortgage interest rates to go up and caused the bank rate to go up and caused the central bank rate to go up.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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LABOUR RELATIONS

REQUEST MINISTER INTERVENE IN MONTREAL GRAIN HANDLERS' DISPUTE

Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour and it relates to the five months old grain handlers' dispute at the port of Montreal.

In view of the fact that the minister injected himself very quickly and expeditiously into the west coast grain handlers' dispute, bringing it to a successful conclusion, and in view of the fact that the present grain handlers' strike has been going

[Mr. Speaker.]

on for five months and has the potential of creating problems for Quebec farmers this winter and for others, is the minister now prepared to insert himself directly into the dispute in an effort to resolve it as successfully as he did the west coast grain handlers' strike?

Hon. Lincoln M. Alexander (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I want to give the hon. member credit for asking that question, because I am also concerned about the matter. But I want to point out to him that at this very moment the mediator, Mr. Rolland Doucet, is meeting with the parties involved in a private way and having meaningful discussions. Progress is being made. For me to say anything further at this particular time would be unproductive.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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NORTHERN AFFAIRS

PROVINCIAL STATUS FOR THE YUKON

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Yesterday, the minister announced substantial changes in the administration of the Yukon which put it well on its way to provincial status and, I might say, has led to the resignation of the commissioner.

How does the minister reconcile that sort of unilateral administrative action with the statements that he and the Prime Minister made with respect to Parliament and the parliamentary system and also their promise to consult with Yukoners through a referendum, to consult with the other provinces on substantial constitutional changes and to consult with the Indians as well? I would ask him if he is now ready to withdraw his instructions of yesterday and refer the matter to a parliamentary committee until at least he carries out some of the promises that he has made on this important question.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to the hon. member that it is the position of this government that responsibility must, and should, lie with those who are elected. The elected people are the legislative council of the Yukon territory which has been given the responsibility. I have given instructions to the commissioner to follow the mandate of this government, that is, to give those responsibilities to the elected people that we were able to give under the Yukon Act.

I have consulted with the Council of Yukon Indians. We have said that we will sit down for further consultations on the constitutional amendment with the Yukon territorial government, the Indians of the Yukon and the interested parties. But what I have to reiterate to the hon. member is that the elected people of the Yukon and those who elected them want to have responsibility in the Yukon, and that is what we have done.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!