

*Inquiries of the Ministry***POWER****HOUSING****COLUMBIA RIVER—REFERENCE OF TREATY TO HOUSE COMMITTEE****REQUEST FOR FINANCING OF EXISTING HOMES**

On the orders of the day:

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Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): I rise with a certain degree of fear and trembling, Mr. Speaker, but I think I am justified owing to the fact that I have a number of constituents who have to make preparations to appear before the external affairs committee, that is with regard to leave from employment, domestic arrangements and so on. Will the Secretary of State for External Affairs inform the house if he expects the Columbia river treaty will come before the committee prior to Christmas?

Mr. O. W. Weichel (Waterloo North): I have a question for the Minister of National Revenue. Many people in Waterloo North and other places across Canada are intensely interested in the possibility of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation making loans on older homes. Knowing the minister's interest in this question when he sat on this side of the house could he tell the house if he intends to introduce amendments to put such a plan into effect?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): We shall have to wait and see.

Hon. J. R. Garland (Minister of National Revenue): Well, Mr. Speaker, I suppose the short answer to my hon. friend's question would be, we must put first things first. However, in view of his great interest in this subject and his courtesy in giving me notice of this question, I may tell him that it has been the policy of this government to take all steps possible to ensure that sufficient new homes are built to meet the needs of Canada's rapidly growing population, and to ensure that these homes are available with the lowest possible cash down payment.

TRANSPORT**GASPE—INQUIRY AS TO STATUS OF RAILWAY PROJECT**

On the orders of the day:

Toward this end, since June the government has reduced the monthly carrying charges by lowering the National Housing Act interest rate, and has lowered the down payment by increasing the amount of loan available. In addition, Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation has been authorized to make direct loans on a very substantial scale in the last quarter of this year in support of the government's winter incentive housing program.

[Translation]

Mr. L. J. Pigeon (Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Prime Minister. Does the government intend to take action following the brief submitted by the Gaspé North chamber of commerce, requesting the construction of the Gaspé railroad as soon as possible?

[Text]

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): This is a matter with which I cannot deal on orders of the day but I will look into it.

OLD AGE SECURITY**ACTION BY PROVINCES NULLIFYING RECENT PENSION INCREASE**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of the increasing extent to which the recent old age pension increase is being nullified by provincial action would the minister consider making an appeal to the provinces to delay their hand in this matter until it can be discussed at the federal-provincial conference which is called for November 25?

I am happy to inform the hon. member that this program is proceeding very well indeed, and that total housing starts for 1963 will exceed those of 1962. To support this program it will be necessary for the government to make available to Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation approximately \$250 million in 1963 for National Housing Act lending. This is additional to the money invested for National Housing Act purposes by Canada's lending institutions. As long as massive support is required from public funds for the new housing program, it would be difficult to extend the facilities of the National Housing Act to all existing housing.

I can assure the hon. member that this matter is given frequent and sympathetic consideration, and when it is possible to announce a change in policy that announcement will be made in this house in the usual way.

Hon. Judy V. LaMarsh (Minister of National Health and Welfare): I would be more than happy to do so, Mr. Speaker.