

Oral Questions

In view of the figures the minister has just given us, I shall be more specific in my question. I know the figures that have been published but I would like to ask whether the department staff could not work more diligently that an answer might be given more quickly with regard to projects submitted and that they might be implemented as quickly as possible?

[English]

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, I think this is a matter of opinion. It is certainly our desire to proceed with the implementation of the projects as quickly as possible and provide our advice of approval to sponsors of projects. In my opinion, under the circumstances the progress made to date compares favourably with last year.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO ACT WITH PROVINCES**

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. In view of the far-reaching social effects of the minister's proposed amendments, particularly when he says there will be a saving of \$100 million, did he, in keeping with the practice of his predecessor, have any discussions with his provincial counterparts regarding the amendments he has now introduced in Bill C-125?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, that consultation has not taken place yet but it is being considered.

Mr. Alexander: In view of the fact there has been some concern about one of the expressions in the bill, which was not in the act, namely, "without just cause", has the minister had an opportunity during the past year to come up with a definition of that phrase by way of regulation, and will this be made available to the committee for its consideration?

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is yes, and there is jurisprudence in this matter. I might add with regard to the application of that particular amendment that the wording is not different from what is in the present act. The real change is in the degree of postponement of benefits.

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MANPOWER**LOCAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM—ALLEGED DELAY IN CONSIDERING APPLICATIONS FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA**

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question supplementary to that asked by the hon. member for Bellechasse. Can the Minister of Manpower and Immigration tell the House why it was in British Columbia that his department ordered the postponement of applications from municipalities?

[Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse).]

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the first approvals for municipal projects under the local initiatives program in British Columbia were granted on December 14. In all fairness I might add that I have requested people on my staff to contact the hon. member for details, which I have not been able to get. I would certainly react if I could get the specifics of his concern.

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HOUSING**FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE—REQUEST FOR TABLING OF AGENDA—PARTICIPATION BY MUNICIPAL REPRESENTATIVES**

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs in reference to the tri-level national housing conference that is going to be held on Monday. In light of the fact the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities are very disappointed that they will not be able to participate, may I ask the minister whether the agenda has been agreed to by him and the provinces, and would he be prepared to file that agenda today? While he is on his feet, will he also tell us whether or not mayors and other municipal representatives will be able to participate in the conference and not just be there as observers?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I hope to publish the agenda today. I certainly hope it will be such as to allow all provinces and all participants to put forward whatever points of view they wish. One province has for the moment expressed a reservation about one item on the agenda, and I would like to clear that up before the agenda is published. If it is not made available today then this will certainly be done on Monday. I reiterate my hope that the agenda is so structured as to allow all points of view to be fully expressed.

With regard to the question of municipal representatives, I have expressed the hope in letters as far back as last September that provincial delegations would include municipal representatives. I think that was the proper position for me to take, and I would strongly urge the provinces to do that. I would also hope, and I will be proposing on Monday, that for the future there be a different system for the inclusion of municipal representatives. I refer hon. members to my speech of January 11th when I indicated—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Hees: There is just so much we can take.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE—REQUEST THAT MEMBERS OF CONSERVATIVE HOUSING COMMITTEE BE ALLOWED TO ATTEND AS OBSERVERS

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg South Centre): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In light of the importance of the federal-provincial housing conference to be held on Monday and Tuesday, will the minister make the neces-