

Given the current trends in housing demand, it is anticipated that rehabilitation activity will increase in importance through the next decade. The RRAP program now accounts for nearly 40% of CMHC's total capital budget. In addition, the program has been opened up to private lending institutions, who can stack the RRAP forgivable loan provided by CMHC with a repayable private sector loan insured by CMHC.

The program will undoubtedly continue to need a large share of whatever funds are available for housing initiatives. CMHC will pursue its efforts to attract more private capital investment in the program.

CMHC is seeking approval for increased funds to enrich the RRAP program. Currently, loan forgiveness of up to \$3,750 is available for homeowners and up to \$2,500 per unit for rental units. The level of forgiveness available depends on the program participants' income. Currently, forgiveness is available to people who earn \$10,000 or less. The amount of forgiveness increases as the income level decreases, and full forgiveness is available to people with incomes of less than \$6,000.

The increased funding requested will cover proposed improvements to benefits for program participants through increases in the amount of forgiveness or grant available, and through significantly raising the income ceiling for eligibility. This is an important step in improving the program, as it will enable more people of fixed and low incomes to repair their homes.

People who wish to upgrade the energy efficiency of their homes can also obtain assistance available under the Canadian Home Insulation Program. CHIP provides grants of up to \$500 for materials and labour to improve the level of insulation in homeowner or rental units.

NEWFOUNDLAND

ANNUAL SEAL HUNT—DYE SPRAYING OF SEALS BY PROTESTERS

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, the next answer is also in response to a question asked by Senator Marshall on April 23 last dealing with the annual seal hunt and the dye spraying of seals by protesters. The answer is:

I am informed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans that experiments have been conducted on the effects of dyeing young harp seals. Apparently, small quantities of dye are not harmful to either the pup or the mother-pup interaction. In large quantities, however, it is possible that harmful effects could result. Certain dyes, for example, might possess odours which could interfere with the mother's ability to identify her own pup.

Although conclusive results are not yet available, individuals would be well advised to consider the possible dangers to the harp seal pups they claim they want to protect.

[Senator Frith.]

AIRLINES

APPLICATION OF EASTERN PROVINCIAL AIRWAYS TO EXTEND SERVICE

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, next is an answer to a question posed by Senator Smith (Colchester) concerning the application of Eastern Provincial Airways to extend their services. The answer is as follows:

As of today, no official appeal from the decision of the Canadian Transportation Commission (CTC) has been received from Eastern Provincial Airways.

Senator Smith, I have some background information on this matter which perhaps you would like to examine. If you wish, I could read it, because you might wish to ask a supplementary question on it.

Senator Smith (Colchester): If it is not too long, it would be helpful to read it.

Senator Frith: The background information I have been given is as follows:

On April 15, in a telex to the Prime Minister, the Atlantic Premiers asked that the federal government "immediately suspend and review" the decision of the CTC, on April 9, to give the Toronto-Halifax route to CP Air rather than EPA.

Basis for the request: EPA is vitally important to economic activity of Atlantic region.

EPA needs the route for practical and financial reasons. Atlantic provinces supported EPA's application and object to dismissal of their views by the CTC.

Federal/Provincial Relations Office has drafted acknowledgement for Prime Minister's signature. PM asked Minister of Transport to review this matter on a priority basis.

Matter could be handled by the Minister of Transport or at the level of Cabinet.

Cabinet could make a decision quite quickly on its own motion or it could ask for interventions. In the latter case, it could take until late June and possibly longer to reach a decision.

Senator Smith (Colchester): I have a supplementary question to put now. The answer started with "as of today", and I wonder if that refers to today or to another day when the answer was prepared.

Senator Frith: The only date on the document, honourable senators, is April 25. So the reply is recent, but not of today, in the strict sense of the word.

● (2100)

ROYAL CANADIAN MINT

PRICE OF 1980 SILVER DOLLARS

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, the next answer is a fairly lengthy one in