

SOCIAL SECURITY

OLD AGE PENSIONS—INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE INCREASE—CONSULTATION WITH PROVINCES

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the munificent Minister of National Health and Welfare. Can he advise whether he still intends to present legislation at an early date fulfilling his promise of a substantial increase in old age security pensions, or has he now decided to hold discussions with his provincial counterparts before bringing in this measure of relief for Canada's senior citizens?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I have contacted my provincial colleagues these past few days and, following these consultations, I have invited them to a meeting called for next Friday, February 2—that is for one day only—in order to discuss this whole question and I hope I can then introduce the required legislation in a near enough future.

[English]

Mr. Macquarrie: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister if the timing and the amount of this pension increase and indeed, the introduction of the legislation are geared to approval by the provincial counterparts of the minister, or does he plan to hold to his original promise to the House to proceed in any case?

Mr. Lalonde: The answer is no to the first part of the question, Mr. Speaker. Obviously the discussions taking place are consultations, and no veto power is envisaged for any or all of the provinces.

Mr. Macquarrie: Do I take it that the minister is in fact going to proceed with his own plan regardless of the views of the provinces? In that case, what is the purpose of the conference?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

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• (1510)

HOUSING

LAND ASSEMBLY PROGRAM—ALLEGED REJECTION BY PROVINCES OF AMOUNT OF FEDERAL FUND

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): I have a question for the Minister of State for Urban Affairs, Mr. Speaker. Following the conference held the past few days in Ottawa and following the presentation by the minister of the proposal of the federal government to provide \$100 million for the assembly of land and that proposal having been universally rejected by the provinces as being inadequate, would the minister inform the House whether he is considering substantially increasing that amount before he brings the proposed amendments to the National Housing Act before the House?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): First of all, Mr. Speaker, that budgetary level is not pro-

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vided for in the amendments; second, the figure was not universally rejected; third, it is more than double any figure the provinces have spent in the past and I have urged them to spend at least what they are permitted. I would be interested to see action in this regard. Fourth, I suggested, and it was agreed, that there should be immediate intergovernmental consultation on the development of a coherent land strategy for such purposes as determining what the appropriate investment, federally, provincially and municipally, in land assembly should be.

SUGGESTED CHANGE IN REGULATIONS DEFINING FAMILY

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I can see that we are going to get no change in that respect so I shall try another. In view of the fact that the proposed changes as outlined by the government define a family as constituting three people and as that would exclude the thousands of families with only two members already existing in the country, in the same government revisions is the minister proposing to change his proposed definition and bring it in line with the desires expressed by some provinces?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member is referring to is suggestions made by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation about what possible regulations there might be. I have not accepted the size of a family as being two or three or otherwise. There were representations made for the purpose of the regulations on behalf of single parent families and I think the regulations should take into account the provision within the section that the hon. member has referred to of single parent families.

LAND ASSEMBLY PROGRAM—DISCUSSION WITH PROVINCES—REQUEST FOR FORMULA TO REDUCE LAND COSTS

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In light of answer just given by the minister with regard to provincial representations concerning the \$100 million, which everybody agrees is inadequate, and in view of the high cost of building houses on land in urban centres, may I ask the minister whether any formula was agreed to that would bring down the cost of land so that more than 4 per cent of the population of Toronto could afford to buy a new home?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the amount that the hon. member says is inadequate is over five times more than his party indicated its contribution would be during the election campaign.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am sure that the minister and the hon. member asking the question will appreciate that this is debate. Perhaps the hon. member has a supplementary question.

Mr. Woolliams: I wonder if the minister would mind answering whether there was any discussion of the high