

However, it is not part of the Western Development Fund. It is part of the western railway transportation project. Yesterday the Minister of Finance said that the number of jobs it will bring about amount to 400,000 person-years, if I recall well.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An Hon. Member: Forty thousand.

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CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

REQUEST THAT CALGARY RENT INCREASES BE DEFERRED

Mr. John Kushner (Calgary East): Madam Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Minister responsible for housing. I have written to the Minister and met with him last week with regard to the outrageous rent increases at Vista Courts Apartments in Calgary. Is the Minister in a position to defer this horrendous 250 per cent rent increase until the question is resolved, since no consultation took place between the management and tenants, especially in these hard times when we are preaching six and five?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, in the area of housing, which is under the control of CMHC, the six and five policy is certainly very strictly adhered to, and this was announced by my predecessor some months ago. In the area of concern to the Hon. Member, I can tell him that these are units which were offered for purchase to the builders. They had received subsidized rents. However, I have considered the matter and asked CMHC to review that decision and hope to be able to give information to the Hon. Member in the next few days.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR LOW-COST HOUSING

Mr. John Kushner (Calgary East): Madam Speaker, has the Minister had any communications or carried out negotiations with regard to divesting responsibility for low-cost housing to the municipalities or the provinces? If the Minister has, will Parliament or the community have any input at all before a firm commitment is made by the Government?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, I hope that the hon. member's very general question does not lead me to misinform him. The Government of Canada certainly does not intend to lessen its interest in what we call social housing, which provides assistance for those whose income is really not adequate to meet the cost of housing on a competitive basis.

● (1150)

There are some areas where discussions do take place with provinces and municipalities. If we can arrive at a solution where these organizations or jurisdictions help us in providing more housing for those on low income, that of course is very beneficial. I will try to develop these matters and consult with

Parliament through committees and otherwise as Hon. Members desire.

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PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

AUDITOR GENERAL'S CERTIFICATE

Mr. Doug Anguish (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. This week the Public Accounts of Canada for the year ending March 31, 1982, were released. The Auditor General has levelled a most serious and, I believe, unprecedented qualification in his certificate on pages 2.15 and 2.16 of the Public Accounts. The Auditor General told the Minister of Finance that, in his opinion, the accumulated deficit, which makes up the national debt over the years, could be as much as \$17 billion more than what in fact the Government is reporting because of its shabby and unapproved bookkeeping methods. I am sure the Minister is very concerned about this. What is the Minister willing to do to expose this understatement of the Accounts of Canada to the people of the country? Also, what is he willing to do to rectify this very serious situation?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I realize that the Hon. Member has not been a Member of this House for many years. If he had been, he would realize that this debate has been going on for many years with the Auditor General and in the accounting profession. There has been debate on this subject in the Public Accounts Committee. There is an honest division of opinion as to the best way of presenting the accounts of the Government. Some accountants argue on one side, and some accountants argue on the other side. That debate has been published and is well known. It is on the record in the Public Accounts Committee. Indeed, it has been demonstrated in the statement to which the Hon. Member has referred. It is not new. It is a question of honest division of opinion.

Mr. Anguish: With all due respect to the Minister of Finance, I may be a young Member of Parliament, but I am certainly not stupid.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Doug Anguish (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake): Madam Speaker, the Auditor General is an officer of this Parliament. He has told us that the Accounts of Canada are in shabby shape. We have not honoured his request over the years to do the proper accounting that is necessary. He has told us this many times. I am not surprised that the Deputy Minister resigned—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The Hon. Member is now arguing. There is a time to argue and a time to ask questions. I would ask that he get to his question.