

[English]

HOUSING

AGREEMENT OF PROVINCES ON NEW POLICY

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. We have been treated to another example of the new techniques of federal-provincial relations in the area of housing. With regard to the new, fundamentally changed housing package that the minister will introduce in the House tomorrow, has he secured the agreement of the provinces regarding the new approach presented to us yesterday without consultation with the House of Commons or the committee.

Does the minister have the agreement of the provinces for this new approach, or is it his intention to immediately call together the housing ministers of the provinces to discuss their role in this new federal scheme?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has a very short memory. Not very long ago I explained in detail the various aspects of this policy when appearing before a standing committee of this House. Second, the hon. member should know there was a federal-provincial conference of ministers of housing where all these proposals were extensively discussed. The provincial officials participated in those discussions and made some very valuable suggestions. Third, this subject was also raised at the time of the first ministers' conference. I do not know on what basis the hon. member draws the conclusion that there has been no consultation. Indeed, there have been extensive consultations. What we want to do is clearly in line with the priorities established by the provinces.

Mr. Oberle: Mr. Speaker, my memory serves me quite well. It tells me that the president of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation was not allowed to answer questions in the committee. I did not ask the minister whether there was consultation; rather, I asked whether there was agreement with the provinces, because my information is that there was not. Is this the new way the government arranges its priorities in the field of economic strategy, taking away \$500 million from the one sector that has the potential of creating new jobs and alleviating poverty and abolishing any form of subsidy that formerly existed under that program?

[Translation]

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, I am under the impression that the hon. member is disappointed because this is an excellent policy which was discussed at length with provincial authorities. The proposals put forward are designed essentially to increase the participation of both levels of government, federal and provincial, in the construction of more homes for low income Canadians. The Conservative member may not agree with our objective to provide decent housing to low income families and senior citizens, but it certainly meets the needs and aspirations of most Canadians.

Oral Questions

● (1442)

[English]

COMMUNICATIONS

TELEVISION PROGRAMS FOR THE DEAF

Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Communications. I should like to ask the hon. lady, bearing in mind her concern, what is being done to evaluate a system which would make television more accessible to the two million or so people in Canada who suffer from various degrees of deafness and for whom little has been done, politically or otherwise, because they are not a particularly visible group. What is being done to develop a system which would be acceptable and Canada-wide, instead of the mess of pottage the deaf are now getting?

Hon. Jeanne Sauvé (Minister of Communications): I think the hon. member is quite unfair when he says this is a mess. On the contrary, research has been going on to help the deaf follow television programs. I told the hon. member last week, or ten days ago, that we are studying a system incorporating a hidden caption on the television screen coupled to a decoder which would allow the deaf to follow the dialogue.

A prototype of such a decoder exists at the present time. It is, of course, an expensive gadget—it costs about \$2,000—but everyone knows there is a great difference between the cost of a prototype and the cost of a product when sold to the public. Nevertheless, price, I would think, would be one of the obstacles. The first thing, though, is to develop the technology which would enable the deaf to have fuller access to national television, and that is what we are doing.

Mr. Rynard: Ten o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

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NATIONAL SECURITY

RCMP BREAK-INS

Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General. It is now confirmed that there is no legal opinion which justified the surreptitious entries which do not relate to the placing of electronic devices: that is my understanding of the answer given by the Solicitor General. This being the case, will the hon. gentleman take the House into his confidence and tell us how many such surreptitious entries did not relate to the setting of wiretaps, particularly in view of the fact that 402 of the 419 surreptitious entries took place in British Columbia? Would he advise the House how many were legal; how many were not covered by a legal opinion backing them up?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Solicitor General): As the hon. gentleman knows, the evidence to which he refers has been adduced before the McDonald commission. The whole subject matter of surreptitious entry, including surreptitious entries effected in order to place electronic surveillance equipment and those