

Oral Questions

HOUSING

REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE ALL THOSE PURCHASING NEW HOMES WILL RECEIVE \$500 GRANT

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. Considering that many home owners currently purchasing new houses are finding that they cannot receive their \$500 new home ownership grant because the purchases cannot be processed quickly enough, will the government ensure that all individuals purchasing homes before the end of the month will receive the \$500 grant?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am an optimist; I am signing my mail. In answer to the question of the hon. member, certainly those applications which are being processed will be honoured. I will be making further announcements within the next day or so regarding the future of the program itself.

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF \$500 GRANT PROGRAM

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): In view of the fact that the new home ownership grant has eased the entry into the housing market for consumers, and considering that the availability of this grant will terminate on October 31, 1975, does the government have any intention of extending this deadline so that those who wish to purchase homes in the future can have the same benefit as those who have purchased homes under this program, and would the minister give further consideration to extending the program to existing homes rather than just new homes as at present?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): If I could answer the latter part of the question first, the answer is no. With regard to the first part of the question, I will be making an announcement within the next day or two, when a decision will be made. Certainly we recognize the value of this program, but as hon. members know, I will be bringing to parliament shortly a far more comprehensive program which I am sure will be welcomed by both sides of the House.

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INCOME TAX

POSSIBILITY OF AMENDMENT TO CONFISCATE INCOME IN EXCESS OF GUIDELINES

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Acting Prime Minister. In view of the statement of the Prime Minister outside the House yesterday threatening to tax away any pay increases in excess of the guidelines of the government, I would like to ask the Acting Prime Minister to inform the House whether it is the intention of the government to bring in legislation amending the Income Tax Act to permit the use of the taxation system to confiscate income in excess of the guidelines.

[Mr. Alexander.]

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we hope that will not be necessary.

AVAILABILITY OF TAX RETURNS TO ANTI-INFLATION BOARD

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Since the Prime Minister is suggesting one or two alternatives, I would like to ask the Acting Prime Minister whether it is the intention of the government to allow the administrator of the Anti-Inflation Board to have access to the income tax returns of Canadians or groups of Canadians in view of the confidentiality of such returns.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): I would not have thought this likely. I would have thought that this would require legislation. If legislation is required, then it would come before the House. I have not heard of any suggestion of that kind.

Mr. Nystrom: How will the government enact the suggestion made outside the House by the Prime Minister yesterday if it does not do it in this manner?

Mr. Sharp: Any idea of taxing back excess of earnings which are over the guidelines, or any other procedure like this, would require legislation by the House of Commons.

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THE MINISTRY

REASON FOR ABSENCE OF MINISTERS—POSSIBLE USE OF ROTATION SYSTEM

Mr. Paul Dick (Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I was hoping for the second day in a row to be able to put a question. I wanted to put a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, but in view of the fact that only four of the ten ministers who adorn the front treasury benches are present in the House, I shall put my question to the Acting Prime Minister as government House leader. Is it now the position of this government that it is putting its ministers back on a rotation system, in view of the fact that few of them are ever here?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the reason there are quite a number of absences today, which I regret as much as anyone else in the House of Commons, is the fact that quite a number of ministers are out explaining the government's anti-inflation program in various parts of the country.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Dick: Why not do it in the House then?

Mr. Sharp: I think it is desirable that some of the rather less accurate information which has been spread about by those who may not agree with the program should be answered, so that the public is not confused about the intentions of the government. The other reason some ministers are absent is that they are attending a federal-pro-