

Oral Questions

be an increase in requests for use of those social designated units.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): User pays.

Mr. Cosgrove: I can confirm—I have a recollection of a project in Vancouver within the last couple of days which has been designated for the handicapped under the social programs of the government.

Miss Carney: My supplementary question is also addressed to the minister responsible for housing. I might refresh his memory. I understand that his department has apparently tripled the number of houses allocated for the handicapped this year. He may look into that.

My supplementary question deals with the maximum unit price of housing for the handicapped which is set by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation at about \$68,000. Considering the fact that the average unit price for homes in Vancouver is now \$156,000, what measures is the minister taking to increase the \$68,000 limit to more realistic market levels?

Mr. Cosgrove: The response of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation on the question of multiple unit prices—the MUPs, which is a control device to ensure quality for money expended and the integrity of the projects—is under constant review in all of the programs to which it applies. In the Vancouver market, for example, that particular design provision with respect to all of the designated areas under MUPs is under review. I am happy to say that so far as housing for handicapped is concerned, because of additional building requirements and expense involved in some of the multiple features, CMHC is also reviewing the relationship of the MUP price and the different categories within it, with a view to assisting handicapped people.

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NATIONAL ENERGY PROGRAM

SLOWDOWN IN DRILLING RIG ACTIVITY

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Today we have the unfortunate convergence of two unhappy events in the oil industry. As my hon. colleague previously noted, today marks the day the one hundredth rig has left this country since the National Energy Program was announced. We also have, in the *Oilweek*, the announcement that current rig activity this year is lower than last year; 480 wells last year against 467 wells this year.

Hon. members on this side, the drilling industry, and the oil industry have been forewarning this ever since the announcement of the National Energy Program, but the minister has pooh-pooed it at every opportunity. Matters will get worse before they get better.

What action will the minister take, now that these worst fears are being confirmed by actual activity? What action is he

going to take to head off this exodus of drilling rigs which has been so damaging to the alleged number one priority of the energy policy, which is self-sufficiency?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, the hon. member is confirming that he and his colleagues on the other side are certainly very slow readers if they only discovered in the last few weeks that there would be a decline in the activity of rigs in Canada.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lalonde: As a matter of fact the drilling contractors association said, before the budget and the National Energy Program were announced, it was predicting a 30 per cent decline in drilling activity this year due to a surplus of natural gas in this country and an overbuilding of drilling rigs in Canada in the last three years. This was announced and published by the drilling contractors association quite independently of the National Energy Program in the October 28 budget.

My friend has obtained his information a little bit too late, I am afraid. He should have read—

Mr. Clark: Will you answer the question now, Marc?

Mr. Lalonde: —what the industry was saying before the budget, and the publication of the National Energy Program.

Mr. Wilson: Again, the minister has neglected to answer the question. Maybe “neglect” is not the right word. He does not want to face the truth.

Mr. Clark: That’s right.

Mr. Wilson: What is happening here in Canada is a result of actions taken in the National Energy Program. Cutbacks in activity have been announced since October 28 by many oil industry representatives in this country. What is happening in Canada is in stark contrast to the United States. Let me give you a couple of figures. Three thousand, eight hundred drilling rigs were active there last year, against 4,700 this year. I might remind the minister that 100 rigs are Canadian. This is expected to lead to an increase of 12 per cent in drilling activity.

Some hon. Members: Order, order.

Mr. Wilson: Will the minister explain why he has championed this energy program when it is having such disastrous results for Canada; and is he proposing to announce changes in policy prior to the meeting on April 13 with Mr. Leitch, which will give some signal to these drilling companies to leave their drilling rigs in Canada so they can do the job in Canada, to produce supply in this country?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!