

HOUSING

LAND BANKING—REFUSAL OF REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE BY
CITY OF VANCOUVER

Mrs. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Madam Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for CMHC, whom I would like to welcome back from the city of Vancouver which, to quote him, has the hottest housing crisis in North America. The mayor of Vancouver asked the minister for \$15 million to help establish a land bank program, which is absolutely essential to de-escalate the extreme situation going on in the housing field in that city, and also to build affordable housing. How can the minister justify to the House the fact that he refused this help for Vancouver when apparently he agreed that there is a terrible housing situation there, and when he also admitted that he has surplus funds available in his community service grants budget which could be used for this very purpose? Why does the minister have to wait for advice from a real estate conference in March before acting on behalf of Vancouver?

● (1425)

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, in my discussions with Mr. Chabot, the provincial minister for housing and with the mayor, I think it was generally understood that the land banking proposal, the request for \$15 million, was a long-term or medium-term plan of the mayor and council in addressing the question of need, the point being that if lands were made available in the future possibly the problem being experienced now in Vancouver and in the lower mainland would not be as acute. It is a request for all governments to join in co-operation, as we have in the past, under some program for addressing housing needs. I think the mayor was more concerned with the immediacy of the problem. Of course, in that respect we have been able to respond immediately with the designation of social housing units, from an initial designation of 600 last year to over 3,000 for the year ending 1980. I am directing my attention to the immediate needs, and I thought the mayor, the councillors and the provincial minister with whom I met understood that as well.

ADDITIONAL SOCIAL HOUSING FUNDS—ELIMINATION OF
SPECULATION

Mrs. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Madam Speaker, certainly the situation in Vancouver demands action now. Why wait for spring; it is now that a solution is needed and the planning should start.

My supplementary question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. Last week the minister said that he would forward my request for additional social housing funds to the cabinet social development committee. The first part of my question is: Will the minister confirm that he submitted it to, and supported it in, the social development committee? Second, since the monthly increase in the value of a home in Vancouver is greater than the earnings of a worker, and the vacancy rates in at least six other major cities in

Presence in Gallery

Canada are very low, what action will the minister take to bring in a 100 per cent capital gains tax in order to eliminate this terrible speculation in housing?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, in the interests of brevity, the answer to the first part of the question is yes and the answer to the second part is no.

Mrs. Mitchell: Madam Speaker, I will return to the minister responsible for CMHC. Perhaps the minister is aware that last week the hon. member for Oshawa was in Vancouver—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would ask the hon. member to omit her preambles and go immediately to her question.

Mrs. Mitchell: Does the minister support the economic recovery program proposed by the hon. member for Oshawa which would include lower mortgage interests, revitalizing CMHC, increasing non-profit housing, leasing Crown land for housing, and reinstating community services grants to municipalities?

Some hon. Members: Order, order.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, the hon. member made submissions on the designated day last week. I think there were ten points which perhaps reflected her idea of an economic recovery program. I indicated in my first answer that the government is addressing a number of those points in order of priority, where we think we can achieve the most immediate good in response to the present tight market. For some other areas such as the community services program to which she alluded, the money and space will not be free until 1982.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS
FOR AUSTRALIA

Madam Speaker: I should like to draw the attention of members of the House to the presence in our gallery of the Minister of Communications and leader of the House for Australia, the Right Hon. Ian Sinclair.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Madam Speaker: The hon. member for Victoria.

Hon. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Madam Speaker, since the Minister of Supply and Services is not present in the