

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Calgary North for a second supplementary on this subject and then the hon. member for Hamilton West because, from the number of supplementaries being sought on this subject, I suspect that we could again have a full fledged budget debate during the question period.

Mr. Woolliams: As a prelude to my question, I hope the minister is not suggesting that the rates are set out in the act. When the matter comes before the cabinet, for the rates to be set by order in council, will he take the position that these rates of interest on money to be lent for public housing and low cost housing under the new program he has been talking about will be frozen at a rate that will enable people on fixed incomes and pensions to be able to afford shelter?

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, I think the beneficial interest rate charged by CMHC should be related to the government's borrowing rate. I would have much preferred to have an increase in the budget for very substantial subsidization of rents for senior citizens and public housing.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Hamilton West.

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the minister responsible for immigration regarding the very unsatisfactory state—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I apologize to the hon. member for Hamilton West. I have to interrupt him because the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate rises on a point of order.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, on Monday and yesterday, and again today with the hon. member for Shefford, questions were raised with the Minister of Finance regarding a formal communication or sanction of the move by the Bank of Canada. I know Your Honour will realize that the question has been put to the minister before, but the minister has not given a clear answer whether the move means that a restrictive monetary policy is now officially sanctioned government policy. I think the hon. member for Shefford had a very legitimate question and the minister did not answer, or perhaps was not permitted to answer. I think it should be on the record whether this policy has been formally sanctioned in communications between the minister and the Governor of the Bank of Canada.

Mr. Speaker: I again apologize to the hon. member for Hamilton West. He has the floor.

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IMMIGRATION

INQUIRY AS TO INTRODUCTION OF AMENDMENTS TO
IMMIGRATION APPEAL BOARD ACT

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the minister responsible for immigration. In light of the very unsatisfactory situation with respect to immigration and the accelerating number of appears, and in order to clear the air, would

[Mr. Woolliams.]

the minister advise whether in fact he has legislation prepared in order to deal with the appeal board, and how long has it been ready for presentation to the House?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated before the committee last Thursday, we hope to present legislation amending the Immigration Appeal Board Act in the very near future, the exact time depending on House business.

• (1500)

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the government House leader. The number of appeals has reached 840 per month, compared with 212 last September. Could the minister advise the House why priority was not given to the presentation of legislation dealing with the appeal board? Why has it been given such low priority in view of this accelerating crisis?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, there is no low priority attached to this item. As soon as the bill is put on the order paper we will make an effort to have it dealt with as quickly as possible. I do not think that will be likely before the Easter adjournment, but soon after that we ought to be in a position to deal with it.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, would the minister advise the House if this is the same legislation that was presented to the cabinet two years ago and was scuttled by the Prime Minister?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I believe the hon. member for Hamilton West has a further supplementary on this subject.

RESPONSIBILITY OF EMPLOYERS TO CHECK ON
EMPLOYMENT VISAS

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): With your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, it is a related question involving immigration. The minister has tried to clear up a problem that exists regarding employers. We understood that he was going to use a gentle hand with visitors but we found they were placed in jail. He said he would not use a heavy hand with employers. Can the minister advise the House of the situation respecting employers prior to the imposition of the regulations covering employment visas? I believe he has an answer which would clarify the situation.

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the responsibility of an employer is that he may not knowingly employ a person who requires, yet does not possess, an employment visa. It has always been an offence to knowingly induce, aid or abet, or attempt to induce, aid or abet any person to violate a provision of the Immigration Act and the regulations thereunder. On the presumption that employers have not knowingly violated the law prior to March 31, 1973, it is not required that they go back through their employment records to check the legality of their employees prior to that date.