

Inquiries of the Ministry

found from the revenues raised within the territories but that it would not be financially practical, in view of the other needs and the circumstances of the territories to raise more than a minor part of the cost in this way; and

(c) That the officers of the territorial administration should do their utmost in the negotiations for the federal-territorial financial agreement for the period beginning April 1, 1962, to urge upon the federal authorities the importance of making provision through an increased grant for adequate health services along the lines referred to.

The financial arrangements between the federal government and the territories involve grants on a five-year basis somewhat along the lines of federal-provincial agreements, but adjusted to the special needs of the territories. Discussions concerning the basis for grants for the period beginning April 1, 1962, are now under way. The problem raised by the council of the Northwest Territories in the financing of adequate health services will be considered in connection with those negotiations.

Lest there be any misunderstanding, may I add, Mr. Speaker, that the council of the Northwest Territories does not have to meet the health costs of Indians and Eskimos in the north. This is a federal responsibility, and so also is the hospital insurance program initiated last year which covers all residents of the territories.

TRANSPORT**P.E.I. CAUSEWAY—REQUEST FOR PROGRESS REPORT**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Maurice Bourget (Levis): Mr. Speaker, I have a question I should like to ask the Minister of Public Works. Is the minister in a position to give a progress report on the proposed Prince Edward Island causeway?

Hon. D. J. Walker (Minister of Public Works): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Bourget: A supplementary question. Does the minister intend to give such a report before his estimates are brought down for discussion?

Mr. Walker: Yes, I will, Mr. Speaker.

ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY**RENOUS BASE, N.B.—CHANGE IN HEATING PLANT**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Associate Minister of National Defence. In view of the answer given yesterday by the minister regarding the conversion from coal to oil at the Renous naval base heating plant in New Brunswick, can the minister inform the house why this was done and has he any further information on the subject?

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Hon. Pierre Seigny (Associate Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. member for Cape Breton North and Victoria may I say that the economy realized by the change which I announced in this house yesterday is of the order of \$13,000. The amount of coal used under the former system was of the order of only 45 tons. This substantial economy indicates that the change is appropriate.

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): A supplementary question. I can appreciate what the minister says, but if the change-over has not taken place will he give consideration to investigating whether it may be possible to instal an automatic coal burner?

Mr. Speaker: Order. If there are more detailed questions to be asked I think they might be taken up at the appropriate time, when the estimates are before the house.

HOUSING**STATEMENT OF YEAR END FIGURES ON HOUSING STARTS**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. D. J. Walker (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I should like to reply to a question asked by the hon. member for Nipissing on January 18. Our final figures on housing for 1960 show that housing starts in all areas were 108,858, of which 76,687 were in centres of population of 5,000 or more. The completions for the year 1960 number 123,757, and houses under construction at year end were 65,773.

Mr. J. R. Garland (Nipissing): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Public Works. Since this figure of 108,000 is now available—

Mr. Walker: No; 108,858.

Mr. Garland: Since these figures represent the lowest number of starts since 1953, will the minister say whether the government has given any consideration to an early lowering of the National Housing Act interest rate?

Mr. Walker: Mr. Speaker, the government has given consideration to a great many things in the matter of housing. It has instituted a tremendous program which the hon. member knows about, and all other questions that have not yet been dealt with are constantly under consideration by the government.

COMMUNICATIONS**PACIFIC CABLE—STATEMENT ON DIVISION OF WORK**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Leon Balcer (Minister of Transport): On Tuesday last the hon. member for Laurier inquired regarding the cable to be constructed