

of money—at reasonable rates—necessary to build houses in 1975?

[English]

Mr. Danson: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I have asked not only the leaders and representatives of the building industry but also the lending institutions to meet with me in Ottawa in the next several days so we can discuss these matters in relation to housing.

NEIGHBOURHOOD IMPROVEMENT AND RESIDENTIAL
REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS—REQUEST FOR
INCREASED FUNDS

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. In view of the fact the Economic Council of Canada is urging the government to increase funding for the rehabilitation of housing for low income earners, has the minister met with the provinces to designate areas where the Neighbourhood Improvement Program will apply and also with regard to the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program? Is the minister intending to increase the funding under this program which at present is very low, as it would do much to satisfy the needs of low income people trying to bring their homes up to standard?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I was interested in the remarks of the Economic Council of Canada in relation to substandard housing. There is more in this country than we should be tolerating. I am pleased to say that all provinces have now signed Neighbourhood Improvement Program agreements. Already grants of \$41 million have been committed and \$23 million in loans. I believe there are some 65 areas designated under RRAP. This is now expanding. It has been a long process getting these agreements in place and meeting with the various provinces and municipalities. The program is well underway. I am sure there will be adequate funding. I am pleased to say I will be meeting with officials of municipalities in Nova Scotia on Monday on this very subject, and I hope to repeat that across the country.

POSSIBLE EXTENSION OF REHABILITATION PROGRAMS TO
RURAL AND NATIVE HOUSING

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Along with the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program and taking into account rural and native housing where Canadians in rural areas can qualify for rehabilitation grants apart from the Neighbourhood Improvement Program, will the minister indicate if there is any extension or promotion of effort in this direction by the provinces and what action is being taken in this regard?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I cannot do everything at once. I find I cannot do one thing as well as I would like. This is an extremely high priority. The Economic Council of Canada has highlighted this. The program is very generous. I look at it as one way to make a rather vigorous attack in the coming year and I look forward to having the funds to do that.

Oral Questions

DATE OF INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION CONCERNING FIVE
HUNDRED DOLLAR GRANT

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. In view of the fact that the minister is so concerned about grants, and knowing that the government has been less than honest with the Canadian people in terms of the \$500 grant which now calls for legislation, can the minister advise how close that legislation is in terms of preparation for implementation by way of introduction to the House.

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Yes, Mr. Speaker. Frankly, I was hoping to have it before the House in about a week's time. There have been some delays, but it will be within two week's time unless something unusual happens.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

REFERENCE OF SUBJECT MATTER TO COMMITTEE—
SUGGESTED INCLUSION OF INCIDENT INVOLVING MINISTER
OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the government House leader. In view of the fact the minister seemed to shadow box with the Leader of the Opposition yesterday with regard to reference of the general question of conflict of interest to a committee, has the minister had a chance to discuss with his colleagues, the Minister of Communications and the Secretary of State, a more particular reference involving the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion and a possible conflict of interest there so this matter can be clarified?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, as members of the House will see, I have given notice to the table of a reference of the question of conflict of interest in which members will be invited to first look at the green paper that I tabled today and make recommendations on it so that we have a foundation. Once they have completed that, they can deal with the subject matter of ministers and conflict of interest, and public servants and conflict of interest. This question can be discussed in committee providing, of course, the committee wants to deal with members of parliament as a whole before dealing with special members of parliament who are cabinet ministers.

● (1450)

EMPLOYMENT OF MR. JOEL BELL AS CONSULTANT IN PRIME
MINISTER'S OFFICE—POSSIBLE CONFLICT WITH OTHER
EMPLOYERS' INTERESTS

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Would the Prime Minister tell the House whether or not Mr. Joel Bell who, according to the press, has been hired by the Prime Minister's office as a \$1,000 a week consultant, has in fact other employers or other clients and whether or not Mr. Bell will be incorporated into the Prime Minister's office as a public servant in view of a possible conflict of interest?