

Oral Questions

Mr. Lang: I understand the representation by the hon. member, and I will also discuss this matter with my colleague the Solicitor General in the context of forthcoming bills.

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HOUSING**MORTGAGE INTEREST RATES—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO REDUCE AND INCREASE NUMBER OF STARTS**

Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview): My question is directed to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. The banks increased their mortgage lending rates last week, which will have a serious effect on the housing market this year. In view of the fact that the minister and his officials have contacted bank officials regarding the effects of the increase, will the minister report the results of his consultations and assure the House that the banks will roll back the rate increase?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I certainly cannot give the hon. member such an assurance. Discussions with lenders, builders and client groups is a regular process on my part and the part of my officials. We are watching the situation very carefully and doing everything possible to make certain that a stable mortgage market exists and that housing is available for Canadians.

Mr. Gilbert: Peter Carter, the assistant general manager of the Royal Bank, in a speech yesterday said that mortgage interest rates are probably at their lowest level right now and that they will rise sharply during the year. He estimated there would be about 180,000 starts this year. What does the minister intend to do with regard to controlling interest rates and increasing housing starts?

Mr. Danson: I do not control interest rates. We respond to the money markets as they are, and we make it possible for Canadians to buy housing. We are trying to do that and to find rental accommodation under extremely difficult circumstances and in an uncertain economic climate, but I can assure the hon. member that, in a situation which might be relatively short-term in its consequences, I will not panic by introducing long-term measures.

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COMBINES**POSSIBLE TAKEOVER OF ARGUS CORPORATION BY POWER CORPORATION—ALLEGED CONFLICT OF VIEW BETWEEN CABINET MINISTERS ON APPROPRIATENESS OF ACTION**

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister. Could he tell the House whether the Prime Minister was expressing government policy regarding the proposed takeover of Argus Corporation by Power Corporation when he said he did not know whether it was a good thing, or whether the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce was expressing government policy when he told his constituents that he was against it? Does the

[Mr. Beatty.]

government pay any attention to the views of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in answer to the second part of the question, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce is a valuable minister who contributes greatly to the strength and stability of the Canadian economy.

On the first part of the question, because there is some difference of opinion and some uncertainty, we have appointed a royal commission to investigate the general subject.

● (1500)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE**CAPITAL PUNISHMENT—PRESENTATION OF PETITION**

Mr. John Reynolds (Burnaby-Richmond-Delta): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition on capital punishment on behalf of over 200,000 concerned people across Canada—a very small percentage of the over-all majority who are in favour of capital punishment. May I say the petitions forms were made available in both official languages across Canada.

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. John M. Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: 705, 1,224, 1,457, 1,557, 1,563, 1,584, 1,588, 1,669, 1,925, 1,926, 1,930, 1,952, 2,012, 2,019, 2,078, 2,141, 2,192, 2,210 and 2,217.

Mr. Speaker, if question No. 704 could be made an order for return, this return would be tabled immediately.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

[Text]

DEPARTMENT OF MANPOWER AND IMMIGRATION—TRAVEL EXPENSES**Question No. 705—Mr. Stevens:**

1. In each fiscal year ending March 31, 1972, 1973 and 1974, and for the six month period ending September 30, 1974, what was the aggregate expenditure by the Department of Manpower and Immigration for travel abroad by (a) the Minister of Manpower and Immigration and his immediate staff (b) departmental staff (c) the staff of boards, commissions, tribunals, Crown corporations or other similar agencies reporting to the Minister (d) others whose expenses were paid in part or in whole directly or indirectly by the government?