

Mr. Aiken: Perhaps I could repeat it. I hope the Prime Minister will read the speech made by the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry in Langley, British Columbia, during the course of which he proposed the establishment of national water quality standards, the establishment of a national environmental council and the consolidation of pollution control agencies. I was asking whether the minister was stating government policy when he made those proposals.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I would have to look at the speech before I could answer in any definite way. Some of the elements quoted by the hon. member are, indeed, government policy, for example, when he talks about water standards. But other elements are not.

Mr. Aiken: A supplementary question to the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry. May I ask whether the hon. gentleman consulted with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources before he made that speech?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think that question is in order.

HOUSING

AVAILABILITY OF MORTGAGE FUNDS FOR PRIVATE HOME CONSTRUCTION

Mr. A. D. Alkenbrack (Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): My question is directed to the hon. gentleman listed on the roster as the Minister without Portfolio responsible for housing, which is a strange but perhaps true definition. It arises out of the futile inquiries made by prospective users of Central Mortgage and Housing services in an attempt to obtain individual family housing. When will there be effective access to mortgage funds applicable to private family housing? At the present time funds are not available in this area.

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister without Portfolio): I would need more precise information concerning the location to which the hon. gentleman is referring before I could give him a positive answer. As put, his question is so general that I could give him many indications of circumstances in which this situation might not apply. But I am sure he has a problem and I would be glad to look into it if he will give me the details.

Inquiries of the Ministry

CONFERENCE WITH FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS —AVAILABILITY OF MORE MORTGAGE MONEY

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): My question is a related one concerning the conference the minister held with the financial institutions. Did the minister indicate to the representatives of these institutions that the government rejected both the idea of legislation directed to improving the situation as well as the use of building societies as a means of generating more money for housing?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister without Portfolio): No, Mr. Speaker, I did not indicate to the lending institutions when I discussed this subject with them that such measures were rejected.

Mr. Alexander: In view of the fact, as I understand it, that housing starts for the first eight months of this year are down by approximately one-third, and that by the end of the year we shall only reach a total of approximately 175,000 starts, being a decrease of some 15 per cent compared with last year, is the minister in a position to tell the House and the nation what proposals he is prepared to recommend and support in order to generate more money for housing?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I suggest to the hon. member that he is inviting the minister to make a statement which would normally be made on motions.

Mr. Alexander: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

GRAIN

WHEAT—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON FIRM SALES COMMITMENTS

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): My question is directed to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration who is also responsible for the Wheat Board. Bearing in mind the optimistic statement made by the minister that more than 700 million bushels of grain are likely to be sold in the current year, may I ask whether the minister can inform the House concerning the extent of present firm wheat sale commitments?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): It is not normal practice to make known the precise state of commitments at any given point in time; there are a