

Inquiries of the Ministry

materially. I should add, however, that the banks made only a nominal effort to participate in this enterprise.

Mr. W. M. Benidickson (Kenora-Rainy River): I should like to ask a supplementary question. The Minister of Public Works has indicated that the banking contribution was a nominal one. Can he indicate specifically what their contribution was? And having in mind my question to the minister, when we were discussing legislation in this field, as to their contribution, will he indicate at what point he might perhaps review, as he promised, the role of the banks in this field?

Mr. Walker: Mr. Speaker, the debate on housing was terminated some time ago. I know my hon. friend on his infrequent returns to the house likes to raise it again. I should be glad to reply to these questions during the discussion of my estimates. In the meantime, the policy of the government in regard to housing and also in regard to loans for houses is under constant review. To date the participation of the banks, as my friend must know from the reports which are made from time to time, has amounted to 34.

Mr. M. W. Martin (Timmins): I should like to ask a supplementary question of the Minister of Public Works. Has any reason been given by the banks to the departmental officials, or has any effort been made by the departmental officials, to find out the reason the banks have dropped participation in this housing field by about 90 per cent over last year?

Mr. Walker: Mr. Speaker, we have had no official information from the banks as to why they are not participating. Of course the hon. member for Timmins is aware that the interest rate under the Bank Act is limited to 6 per cent, and any Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation loan would be governed by that existing rate of 6 per cent; whereas other approved lenders are allowed to charge 6½ per cent. That, no doubt, would be some indication of one of the reasons the banks are not participating. As a matter of fact I think all parties in the house were agreed—at least I have not found anybody to say otherwise—that the banks should not have their rate under the Bank Act increased to 6¾ per cent.

Mr. Martin (Timmins): Can the minister inform the house whether his department has approached the banks in this matter in an effort to see whether the limit of 6 per cent is—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member has already asked that question, and it seems to me he is now trying to put his question in

[Mr. Walker.]

terms of what might be called an argument, that might lead to a debate, which would be improper at this time.

(Translation):

INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR**REQUEST FOR COMMENTS OF ASSOCIATE MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Maurice Bourget (Levis): Mr. Speaker, before directing a question to the Associate Minister of National Defence, I wish to welcome him on his return to Canada. I should like to ask whether he has any comments to make about his trip to Paris with regard to the world fair which was supposed to be held in Montreal.

Hon. Pierre Sevigny (Associate Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Levis for his words of welcome on my return to the house. I feel that all necessary comments have already been made on what took place in Paris with regard to the 1967 world fair.

All I wish to say is that all those who dealt with this matter—delegation members as well as public relations officers—spared no effort in the performance of their duties and surely Canada can feel proud of the fact that everything was done with the greatest possible amount of fair play, at least on their part.

(Text):

INDUSTRY**SMALL CARS—STATEMENT ON REPORTED TREASURY BOARD DIRECTIVE RESPECTING GOVERNMENT PURCHASES**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Donald M. Fleming (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the hon. member for Essex East (Mr. Martin) asked me a question which I declined to answer at the time. The question was as follows—

Mr. Martin (Essex East): You did answer it.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): No.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Yes, you did.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): The question was: Will the minister say whether a directive has been issued by the treasury board or any other government body instructing departments of the Canadian government to buy small cars instead of big ones?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The minister answered no.