

Oral Questions

[English]

HOUSING

CMHC CAPITAL FUNDING TO ONTARIO

Mrs. Ursula Appolloni (York South): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs: in particular, it refers to senior citizens' housing in the Toronto area. Can the minister tell the House if he has reviewed CMHC capital funding to Ontario in order to assist the Metro Toronto Housing Corporation?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Yes, Mr. Speaker, the allocation budget for the province of Ontario, under section 43, for public housing has been increased to \$73.3 million. These additional funds should enable the province to assist the Metro Toronto Housing Corporation to realize its 1978 production goal, and it will be of particular assistance to senior citizens projects.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

OVERPAYMENTS UNDER PROGRAM

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration and gets back to the original questions asked in this hour. Regarding the \$142 million overpayment, his director of unemployment insurance is quoted as having said the following, "It is not a major increase in the sense that the whole program is going crazy". This is just another example of overpayments. These have been audited before by the Auditor General. The minister has given us indications that the fraud squad will come back and that there are monitoring systems. Once all of this has been discussed, could the minister tell the House how he expects to get back the \$142 million overpayment which has come out of the pockets of the Canadian taxpayers?

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, as we have indicated, our success ratio in collecting overpayments has been excellent. The area of detected overpayments has been approximately \$65 million, in round figures, and we have collected all but approximately \$5 million or \$6 million of that to date. So the collection mechanism is fine, but that will not solve the undetected payments. The areas which I indicated, the four or five different avenues for a better control mechanism, are the sorts of things which the Auditor General sees as a good move in the right direction. He just wants to see it done more quickly and more efficiently.

REFERENCE OF UIC ANNUAL REPORT TO COMMITTEE

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council. In view of the fact that we are just not receiving answers to the problem of overpayments and the

[Mr. Chrétien.]

entire operation of the Unemployment Insurance Commission, and that the parliamentary standing committees have not been struck, would he give us the assurance that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will be struck forthwith and that the annual report of the Unemployment Insurance Commission will be referred to that committee immediately?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, on the first part of the question, I have asked already that the organizational meetings take place as soon as possible. I think that is under way now and the committees will be set up to meet.

● (1502)

With respect to the reference of the annual report, that is a matter I would have to discuss with the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. As we conclude the Question Period I know that hon. members would want to join with me in signalling the presence in our gallery of a distinguished visitor, in the person of the minister of commerce from India, Hon. Arif Baig.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

PRIVILEGE

MR. NIELSEN—OMISSION IN OFFICIAL REPORT

Mr. Speaker: Yesterday the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) raised a point of order, or possibly a matter of privilege, regarding the omission from *Hansard* the previous day of certain remarks which he recalled had been made by the hon. Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang). The Minister of Transport, in his contribution to the discussion, indeed confirmed that he had made the remarks which had been heard and recalled by the hon. member for Yukon. Those omissions constitute the word "hypothetical"—where the minister had said, "hypothetical" and "theoretical", the word which ultimately appeared was "theoretical" and, subsequently, in the minister's remarks the phrase, "The decision will then be taken by the commission."

On both of these counts I can confirm that the minister did make those remarks, that the omissions did occur, and that the omissions or alterations were not in any way attributable to any intervention by the minister or anyone on the minister's behalf, but in fact were attributable to the editorial staff of *Hansard*. On one occasion there was an editorial change in leaving out the word "hypothetical." On the second occasion it was simply an error in transcription by the reporter who, in