

Oral Questions

them also felt that finding a house that they could afford to buy was a major problem

On June 9, the Royal Bank of Canada confirmed that things have become so bad that even a starter home is now out of reach for millions of Canadian families. In Vancouver, it takes more than 65 per cent of a household's income to cover the cost of an average starter home. In Montreal it is nearly 50 per cent, and in Toronto it takes up to more than three quarters of a family's income.

The Government has known about this developing crisis for at least nine months and still has not lifted a finger to relieve the situation. What does the Minister plan to do now, not next month or next year, to help Canadians who want to buy a home but find the prices too insanely high to afford?

Hon. Alan Redway (Minister of State (Housing)): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member knows, the affordability situation across the country varies greatly. Certainly in places like Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal there is a very substantial affordability situation. In places like Calgary, where I visited yesterday and Edmonton the day before, the situation is not as severe as it is in those other places.

We have some broad national policies that we are trying to apply on a very targeted basis to see if we can assist this. At the moment I am trying to develop with provincial Ministers and the municipal officials some tripartite committees in order to target our programs, to improve the affordability situation.

We have some other programs as well that we are looking at for in the immediate and long run. I trust that all of these will help the affordability situation before too long.

AFFORDABILITY OF HOUSING

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, let me remind the Minister that in this same government survey, 58 per cent of Canadians want the Government to do something about housing. The fact is that the Government has done absolutely nothing for housing affordability. In fact, it has done the opposite. It has increased interest rates, it has higher taxes on construction materials and now has a goods and services tax. It has a direction from the Minister to CMHC that says—

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the Hon. Member could put his question.

Mr. Fontana: It just sets off alarm bells. The alarm bells have already been set off. Can he tell Canadians—

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the Hon. Member to put his question.

Mr. Fontana: Mr. Speaker, enough of this mumbo-jumbo he keeps spouting off in the House, I want to ask the Minister to tell us what Canadians can expect from—

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Oshawa.

* * *

FISHERIES

REDUCTION IN SUPPLY OF FISH FOR PROCESSING

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. On November 17, 1987, in British Columbia, the Minister said in regard to the processing of fish in that province: "I give you my assurance that those jobs will be saved". The next day in the House, when I asked the Minister a question about the same concerns of British Columbians in this sector, he said to me: "The Government will not allow jobs historically established to be threatened".

As the Minister knows, regulations subsequently tabled by himself and the Government have led, as the documents state themselves, to a reduction in supply of fish for processing, resulting in precisely the loss of jobs that the Minister said would not occur.

Will he now admit that he misled the people of British Columbia about these jobs and, if so, what does he plan to do about it?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, in fact, the circumstances are to the contrary. It is the Hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party who is misleading the people of British Columbia because no jobs have been lost and there is no proof that any jobs will be lost. Indeed, the new landing regulations which this Government has enacted to replace those which the international trading community said were discriminatory, unfair and illegal measures, will protect, enhance, and reinforce the opportunities available to our Pacific Coast fishing industry.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, the people of British Columbia in particular will know what utter nonsense the Minister just stated.