

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

URBAN AFFAIRS

INVESTIGATION OF DEPARTMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mrs. Jean E. Pigott (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. While I realize that he has three jobs and that his deputy minister has just returned from a six months' vacation, in light of the ongoing RCMP investigations can the minister assure the House of his confidence in his deputy minister and those who are managing the affairs of his ministry?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I should like the hon. member to be more specific about the investigations she is talking about. I am not aware of many investigations. I am aware of one in Hamilton. I indicated in the House previously that I thought it was very unfair on the part of the hon. member to try to generalize and create doubt in the public mind on the basis of one specific investigation which is taking place with the full support of the CMHC administration. I think the hon. member ought to be more specific when suggesting a series of inquiries. If there are others, she should let me know what she is talking about.

Mrs. Pigott: Again, the minister does not answer the questions put to him.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): That's right.

Mrs. Pigott: If the minister wants a recital, I can give him a recital.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mrs. Pigott: If that is what the minister wants, why does he not ask for the cabinet file compiled by Mr. Basford where he lists all the 11 luxury hotels under section 6(1)? Why does he not talk about 150 Sandford Place in Hamilton? We could talk about Vancouver—

● (1417)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If the hon. member has a supplementary question, would she put it forthwith.

Mrs. Pigott: Mr. Speaker, the minister did ask for a recital.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mrs. Pigott: The document which I held up the other day was signed by the minister. He thought it was public. It says in this document that housing and community service programs also offer a major avenue for federal flexibility in the constitutional debate. Can the minister assure this House that shelter for Canadians is not being used as a bargaining tool at constitutional talks?

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is citing only part of a document in a very partisan way. The total document

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would clearly indicate the excellent policies of this government. I ask the hon. member to table the document.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. Pigott: Mr. Speaker, I realize that I have been here only a few months, but I thought it was the minister who should table documents, not me.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. Pigott: I would gladly offer the document, which is signed by the minister, for tabling.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Selkirk.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE TO STUDY URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Dean Whiteway (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. There has been a record number of AHOP defaults and walkaways this year: the rate is four times that for conventional CMHC mortgages.

My question is in relation to the pending disaster regarding AHOP housing. Can the minister tell the House why his deputy minister ignored a cabinet order signed on July 17, 1973, which would have established a senior interdepartmental committee on urban affairs? That committee produced only one report, and the minister is aware of it. Can the minister tell the House why his department head ignored that cabinet order which would have established this committee on an ongoing basis?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think such a committee has been meeting. I do not know what the hon. member is talking about. I think he is totally out of court when he alleges in this House that the deputy minister ignores cabinet directives.

Mr. Whiteway: Mr. Speaker, I am not making suggestions regarding the deputy minister. I suggest that the minister has ignored his responsibilities. Can the minister produce any committee report other than the one which was produced in 1975? If this committee has been meeting as it should have been doing, and if it has produced annual reports, can the minister produce the reports since 1975?

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, a number of studies are taking place within Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation in order to improve our housing programs. A number of officials from various departments are working together in order to improve the rate of production of housing for low income people who want to have better accommodation in Canada.

The hon. member is talking about some activities which are taking place. There has, indeed, been a series of meetings in order to improve our programs and to facilitate better production of housing. These meetings involve federal and provincial