

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

stage. There was a good discussion. I think the press already have reported it in some detail, giving some of the points of view that were expressed. Because it was an informal meeting and because there was no agreement concerning the making of a report based on it, I feel it would be beyond my jurisdiction to try to report the position taken by the various parties. I can assure my hon. friend however that the atmosphere was one of the utmost co-operation and although one would not expect that many people to be unanimous in respect of everything, we do want to make decisions which will provide the best result, so that the Canadian people will receive the best value for their tax dollars, and decisions which will meet the housing situation wherever it is urgent in this country.

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the minister. Is it a fact that housing developments involving some 3,000 apartments valued at some \$38½ million are still awaiting federal approval? Does this mean that the minister is freezing certain aspects of the housing program and, if so, what aspects?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I think at this point I should offer a word of caution about the form of the questions asked by the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands. I think it is somewhat irregular to ask a minister to confirm or deny a fact, which it seems to me was the form in which the questions were put. I suggest it would be more consistent with the usual practice for the hon. member to ask his question directly.

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** Perhaps I might ask my question direct, Mr. Speaker. Are housing projects involving some 3,000 apartments valued at \$38,500,000 still awaiting federal approval? Has there been some type of freeze on some aspects of the housing program? What aspects are now being held up, and for what reason?

**Mr. Hellyer:** As I just indicated, some projects have been approved, others are in process of being approved, and still others will have to wait a few days until the government has had a chance to review its policy in these matters. It is a fact however that housing construction last year was at an all-time high in the history of the country. This trend has continued during the first part of this year, and I hope it will continue throughout the year.

[Mr. Hellyer.]

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** May I ask the minister whether the particular projects to which I have referred, namely the 3,000 apartments valued at \$38,500,000, are being held up for any particular reason? Is this a matter of policy or merely a matter of processing the applications? Why has there been this apparent freeze in federal housing?

**Mr. Hellyer:** It is impossible for me to know which particular projects the hon. member is referring to.

**Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West):** Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact we are talking about freezing at this particular time, and because urban renewal plays a great part in housing problems in this country, can the minister advise whether the contribution of the federal government to urban renewal projects has or has not been frozen?

**Mr. Hellyer:** Mr. Speaker, it would be difficult, in fact impossible to give a categorical answer to that question, because the answer would be similar to the previous one. In some cases projects have been approved and are continuing. It is obvious in respect of some new projects that some will have to go forward. It is equally obvious that some can be postponed for a few years—and I refer to those which involve large commercial developments, purchases from entrepreneurs, factories, hotels and worn out stores. They can be postponed until such time as we have produced enough housing in this country to meet the urgent needs of Canadians.

**Mr. Alexander:** I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Would the hon. member resume his seat? I note that a number of other members want to ask supplementary questions. We will soon have to go to another subject. I hope hon. members will exercise some restraint in asking supplementary questions on this matter. However, I will allow a supplementary question by the hon. member for Hamilton West.

**Mr. Alexander:** Mr. Speaker, I am trying to obtain a definitive answer from the minister, particularly as to urban renewal programs already commenced. There are some 300 cities involved with this type of program, and it would be a matter of great gratification if the minister could advise those cities that their projects are not frozen. I have in mind urban