

date to replace the present urban renewal sections of the National Housing Act. Of course the debate in the House today will be related to housing and we will be dealing with the government's progressive and forward-looking housing policy.

Mr. Dinsdale: Would the minister confirm whether there has been consultation with communities that have had applications pending since 1968 before making his final decision on a suitable program?

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, in terms of the suggested amendments that we have been considering within the government, the policies have been outlined to provincial ministers and, at my suggestion, in most cases municipalities have been involved in these discussions.

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TRANSPORT

POTASH FREIGHT RATE INCREASE—INTENTION RESPECTING APPEAL

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. In view of the fact a freight rate increase on potash went into effect yesterday and in view of the fact the minister is involved in that area, is it his intention to appeal the rate increase and ask the railways to rescind it?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I will be glad to take that as notice.

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TRADE

TRADING ACCOUNT FIGURES—PLANS TO ASSIST EXPORT INDUSTRIES

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce arising out of the deficit on trading account for the month of April because of the lack of exports and rising imports. I should like to ask the minister whether his policy planning with regard to Canadian industry in his department is based on the expectation that this will be a continuing situation or that this trade deficit is purely a temporary condition confined to one month?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the information provided in this morning's paper is wrong. It refers to a deficit of \$35 million and it should be a surplus of \$2.2 million.

Mr. Stanfield: It was what?

Mr. Pepin: It refers to a deficit of \$35 million and it should have been a surplus of \$2.2 million for the month of April. The difference is that they did not include re-exports in the export figures. The real figure is a surplus

of \$2.2 million. On the basis of the first four months of 1972 the seasonalized annual rate at the moment is about \$600 million surplus in the trade balance for the full year. If you look at the last three months it is \$900 million. That is the picture.

Mr. Stanfield: I hope this does not reflect any complacency on the part of the minister.

Mr. Pepin: No, far from it.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): It is not a deficit—it is not heavy water.

Mr. Stanfield: I would like to ask the minister whether the government has any specific plans in mind to assist Canadian export industries which are not making any significant profits and are therefore not being helped by the budget. Has the minister any specific plans to help other Canadian exports which are suffering difficulties as a result of the increase in the value of the Canadian dollar, for example, about which the former minister of finance took a rather complacent attitude several months ago?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Stanfield: Has the minister any specific plans?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have some doubts as to the question. The hon. Leader of the Opposition is inviting the minister to make a statement which normally ought to be made on motions. He is inviting the minister to indicate what specific plans his department or the government may have under consideration in view of certain circumstances. That information should be given on motions.

• (1200)

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for the length of my question, which was almost as long as the minister's answers. May I ask the minister whether he has any specific plans or whether he will make a statement at an early date, with regard to any specific plans to help industries that are not being helped by the budget introduced by the Minister of Finance?

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, I keep pouring out communiqués; unfortunately, my hon. friend does not seem to read them. In the last four months we have created, in my department, four new ways of helping Canadian exporters. We are contributing 50 per cent of the cost of bidding abroad on capital projects; we contribute 50 per cent toward bringing potential buyers to Canada; we are contributing 50 per cent toward market analysis round the world and we are contributing 50 per cent toward participation in international fairs. We brought in a number of people from big trading companies in Japan to buy in Canada. Three of them have already bought more than \$70 million worth of goods in Canada. We keep pouring these communiqués out every day. I regret that the hon. member does not read them.