

Oral Questions

government of Nova Scotia to proceed immediately with construction of this needed wharf?

Mr. McGrath: What about my wharf?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I will come to the hon. member for St. John's East, and his wharf, next time. I will be meeting the new minister of fisheries for Nova Scotia next Monday afternoon, when I will raise this matter with him. It is obvious that the offer I made to the previous government still stands.

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URBAN AFFAIRS

FUNDING OF HOME INSULATION PROGRAM

Mrs. Jean E. Pigott (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. The federal government's \$2.5 billion budget cut includes a \$110 million reduction for the Canadian Home Insulation Program.

My question to the minister is prompted by a statement from the CMHC news and information director that "... original funding levels were set in a relatively arbitrary manner." Could the minister explain, in light of a cumulative report of the program statistics which shows only 11 per cent accounted for in grants issued, what are the administrative costs of this program and what will be the disposition of the remaining approximately 80 per cent of the budget during the remaining half of this fiscal year?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the question of the hon. member should be put on the order paper because it would require a long explanation with a series of figures to be presented. In short, if I am allowed, I could answer the hon. member by saying that the case had to be arbitrary in the sense that we felt the federal government had to be restrained in its expenditures. We did it in a fashion that would not hurt those on lower incomes, more particularly the clientele of the Department of Urban Affairs, they being low income families and senior citizens.

We had, therefore, more naturally to cut in the case of my department in relation to other programs that were not directly involving or affecting low income families and senior citizens.

Mrs. Pigott: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister confirm that it will be the intention of the government, as outlined by CHIP director Noel Guilbeault "to go directly to the population rather than through TV, and the message will be more direct to come and get the grant and do the insulating." Would the minister indicate how the provinces have reacted to this direct intervention?

Mr. Ouellet: The provinces have indicated that they would like to take the federal money and do the program themselves. That has been the general posture of the provinces every time

[Miss Campbell.]

the federal government has a good program: they would like the federal government to give them the money to carry out these good programs.

I understand that it is the position of the Conservative party to support the provinces in this endeavour, to take the federal money and do things provincially, giving credit to the provincial authorities. We feel there should be a strong federal government, having its own responsibility and doing its own program. We are not going to have ten separate states in Canada; we still want to have one strong federal government.

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POST OFFICE

REQUEST THAT POSTAL CODE BE PRINTED ON HOUSE OF COMMONS' ENVELOPES

Mr. J. R. Ellis (Hastings): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Postmaster General? Now that the inside postal workers are back to work—although from the complaints I am getting, the service is not much better—I have just received a letter from Canada Post. I assume it is meant for me, although it is addressed to an MPP. It gives me some concern because it asks me to put the postal code on envelopes going out of my office.

I wonder if the Postmaster General has spoken to the Minister of Supply and Services and other ministers to make sure that the envelopes going out of my office, which are the same as those going out of every other office, marked only "House of Commons, Canada" will also have the postal code on them?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, the reason is that we are trying to get people to use the postal code because it helps mail to be dealt with more rapidly.

As for the first part of the question, I think the hon. member should understand that even if he does not get his mail regularly at this moment, it is because there is obviously a backlog of mail. We are trying, by way of overtime and the use of casuals, to get it moved as soon as possible. I presume the hon. member will get his mail on time in the next few days.

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FINANCE

INTEREST RATE ON CANADA SAVINGS BONDS

Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. Can the minister tell the House how great is the number of Canada Savings Bonds on which the interest rate is below the present 9.5 per cent and on which it may well have to be raised?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, we are having an active campaign on Canada Savings Bonds at this time and the market is responding very well. I do not want