

Oral Questions

was instrumental in having Mr. Lanza removed from his position last summer and whether there were consultations with the Minister of Transport in this regard?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, on this whole matter—

An hon. Member: There is no answer.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Oh, yes, there are answers. First, I must inform the House in connection with this matter—I probably should have done this before, but I did not have the complete file before me—that I am the one who, in January 1973, two years ago, ordered the RCMP to inquire into alleged Hamilton irregularities. The same is true for the Quebec part of the dredging. I can produce the letters at any time. As Minister of Transport, I asked the Solicitor General to make this—

An hon. Member: Will you table the letters?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Yes, I can do that. I have them here. I will have copies made. They are very regular letters. We thought there was some irregularity. There was some suspicion about the attitude of Mr. Lanza and another person; I do not recall the name, but I can get it in five minutes. I said I would renew their mandate for a few months, but I did not intend to renominate them after that. Actually, they were not renominated to the board.

HAMILTON HARBOUR COMMISSION—REASON FOR FAILURE TO RENEW APPOINTMENTS OF MR. HICKEY AND MR. LANZA AS COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): I thank the minister for his very informative answer. Was there any specific reason why their mandate was not renewed?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): No, there was not. At that time no trial had taken place—there had been no inquiry but there was suspicion and, since those jobs are given at the discretion of cabinet, nothing binds us to nominating someone who might be suspected of not, say, meeting some ethical standards we are supposed to have when we serve the government.

Mr. MacKay: Were there consultations at that time between the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Labour?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): The Minister of Labour was entirely in agreement with what I was doing.

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HOUSING

WILLINGNESS OF GOVERNMENT TO INITIATE FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL PROGRAM TO GRANT MORTGAGES AT 6 PER CENT

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): A question to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. Considering that interest rates on mortgages are now in the neighbourhood of 11 per cent, I would like to ask the minister whether, following the decision by the government of

[Mr. MacKay.]

British Columbia recently to embark on a program which would provide mortgages at 6 per cent, the federal government would be willing to initiate a joint federal-provincial program with all the provinces which are interested in taking part to provide mortgages across the board to Canadians at 6 per cent?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): I do not know whether the hon. member is aware of the fact that we have already made available an effective mortgage rate of 6 per cent for those Canadians who need it. This has been done under federal legislation, and if we can speed up the passage of the housing legislation this afternoon I hope many more Canadians will be able to take advantage of this rate.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: I am well aware that something like .001 per cent of all the mortgages which go out from the federal government go out at 6 per cent, and that is precisely why I asked the minister whether he is willing to undertake the kind of action at the federal level which one province is prepared to take so that the average mortgage rate charged to the average Canadian would be 6 per cent.

Mr. Danson: I do not, of course, accept the premise of the hon. member's question as far as the percentage is concerned, with respect to mortgages which are supported by the central government through CMHC. However, I would be most interested in seeing what another government has come up with and discussing it with them to see what new answers they have found to a complex problem.

REASON FOR REDUCTION IN FUNDS ALLOCATED TO ONTARIO

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Can the minister explain to the House, in the way the Minister of Finance could not on Friday, why CMHC reduced the allocation of funds to the government of Ontario by the following amounts: from \$78 million to \$50.4 million for public housing construction; for co-operative housing from \$65 million to \$55.8 million, and for land assembly from \$55 million to \$35 million? Can he explain these cuts when, in fact, we are faced with the kind of housing crisis which the minister himself has described on previous occasions?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): I do not have the precise figures before me. The capital budget of CMHC has, of course, been increased by 12 per cent over last year and Ontario's share has been increased as well. I shall be meeting with the Ontario housing minister on Monday to discuss the ways in which we can co-operate to ensure that our mutual objectives are best achieved.

● (1430)

Mr. Broadbent: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. The minister has just said that he does not have the figures. I am using figures taken from a CMHC document. I would ask the minister to provide an answer to the House as to why the funds have been cut.