

Oral Questions

[Translation]

TRANSPORT

Mr. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Back in 1985 our government signed a \$25 million agreement with the Province of Quebec for the construction of a highway between Alma and La Baie. Unfortunately, even after six years the government of Quebec has not managed to spend that money, so much so that the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region stands to lose \$11.2 million if nothing is done.

Can the minister tell the people of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean whether his counterpart in Quebec City has been in touch with him to find a solution so that the region will not lose these millions of dollars and that the Alma—La Baie highway link may be completed as soon as possible?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Indeed, Mr. Speaker, under the 1985 federal-provincial agreement we earmarked \$12.5 million, as did the government of Quebec, for the highway referred to by my colleague.

For reasons best known to them, Quebec government officials have yet to invest more than \$6 million of their total appropriation. I will soon be meeting with my colleague the Quebec Minister of Transport and I intend to raise this issue because the funds have been and are still committed by the federal government, and hopefully the government of Quebec will come up with its share of the funds allotted.

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[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Committee on Privileges and Elections from the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, led by the chairman, Mr. Danny Dumaresque.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

HOUSING

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): My question is directed to the Minister of State for Housing. Montreal is the Canadian city to be hardest hit by the abolition of the RRAP which helped renovate rented housing and kept rents moderate, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister understand that Montreal is unique in Canada in that 80 per cent of its people are tenants and that the cuts in the last budget, which Montreal is still suffering from, will make the rent increases unaffordable for the least fortunate Montrealers, because the RRAP was abolished? Will he restore housing assistance for Montreal?

Hon. Alan Redway (Minister of State (Housing)): Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, we have set up a tripartite committee composed of representatives of the federal and Quebec governments and the cities of Montreal, Verdun and Quebec to find a solution to this problem. I hope that the committee will come up with a solution very quickly.

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, the government should look into specific cases before abolishing the program. While the minister is studying, the number of homeless Montrealers is growing.

Will the minister tell this House, Canadians and Montrealers what measures he is going to take to help those Canadians who cannot pay the higher rents when the GST takes effect in January 1991?

[English]

Hon. Alan Redway (Minister of State (Housing)): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is well aware, currently the federal government assists some 600,000 households right across the country.

In this past year and in order to help those needy Canadians to whom the hon. member is referring, particularly in Montreal, the federal government participated in and assisted financially almost 2,500 new housing projects. That included about 18,000 additional housing units for needy households across the country.

In total it meant that the federal government guaranteed capital assistance to build those housing units in the amount of \$1.2 billion in 1989. We are providing subsi-