

Mr. Cosgrove: No, Madam Speaker, I would not agree with that proposition. Nor do I agree that the problem he has identified is a priority that is shared by most Canadians. This government said in the election campaign that we would target our response to those most in need. For example, the other program announced yesterday was directed to people of moderate income who had to rehabilitate their homes. It was to assist them in their home ownership, but in conditions that made living worth while. That is why we announced an increase in the eligibility of those people who would qualify to take government grants to rehabilitate homes, and thus to assist with employment in the housing industry.

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CONVENTION CENTRES

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN DEVELOPMENT OF TORONTO CENTRE

Mr. Norman Kelly (Scarborough Centre): Madam Speaker, I would like to address my question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. As one of the representatives of metropolitan Toronto, I was delighted to hear the minister's announcement of financial assistance to the development of the convention centre in that city. However, the provincial minister of industry and tourism responded to the announcement by stating his preference for the assistance program offered by the Clark government. Will the minister comment on any differences which might exist between this offer and that of his predecessor?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): As far as I am aware, Madam Speaker, the commitment made to the Toronto trade and convention centre, and therefore to the greater well-being of metropolitan Toronto, is certainly not any less than the contribution spoken of by the previous Conservative government. Therefore, rather than sniping at our constructive announcements, the province of Ontario, through its industry minister, should come forward and put its commitments on the line so that this work can go ahead.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

FUNDING OF PROGRAMS

Mr. Tom McMillan (Hillsborough): Madam Speaker, unlike the previous questioner, I have an unplanted question for the Minister of State for Social Development. In view of the dire economic forecasts for the country in the coming year from Statistics Canada and other bodies like the Conference Board, and in view of the fact that in times of recession, spending on environmental matters tends to be among the first to be reduced by successive Liberal governments, will the minister assure the House that the federal government will

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allocate the funds required to confront the serious environmental problems plaguing all Canadians?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, I think the question was addressed to the Minister of State for Social Development. As the minister responsible for the environment, I want to assure the hon. member—as I explained to him both in committees of the House and in private—this government is determined to meet the needs of the country in relation to the environment. We are seeking a variety of ways of strengthening our efforts in that area.

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INDUSTRY

REASON FIRA APPROVED TAKEOVER OF AUTO PARTS OPERATION IN OSHAWA

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East-Revelstoke): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Houdaille Industries Ltd. recently announced its intention to close its Canadian auto parts operation in Oshawa, laying off 283 workers, many with over 30 years' experience. This company received a three-quarter million dollar Industry, Trade and Commerce grant and has been recently purchased by a U.S. corporation which was approved by the Foreign Investment Review Agency.

Will the minister please inquire as to why the Foreign Investment Review Agency approved this takeover, when only months later the entire Canadian operation was closed down despite its being one of the most modern, efficient plants in North America?

● (1450)

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, I have already asked for a full report from the Foreign Investment Review Agency about the undertakings obtained as a result of approving the takeover and the implications for these undertakings of this announcement.

In addition, I met yesterday with representatives of the workers at Houdaille Industries, and I am meeting this afternoon with representatives of the company to see what can be done to enable this plant to continue operating.

Mr. Parker: Madam Speaker, Canada has a \$4 billion deficit in auto parts. General Motors Oshawa operation imports its steel and aluminum bumpers from the United States, while just down the street Houdaille is about to close down.

Will the minister call in the executives of General Motors and demand to know why this preference is being given to foreign suppliers, when Houdaille makes superior bumpers just around the corner?

Mr. Gray: Madam Speaker, I understand that Houdaille Industries has been making a larger bumper of a kind not