

*Oral Questions*

Would the minister pass on to the Minister of Finance the message that this government's high interest rate policy is killing the industry? Will this government finally stand up on behalf of the industry and send a termination notice to the Americans?

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member on seeking to cast blame very broadly for this difficult situation facing that particular industry. He has asked me a particular question. I have replied to it.

I have indicated to him that we are working with American authorities and indeed we are keeping in touch with the Canadian industry. We are also keeping in touch with the provinces affected which, as he knows, are very closely involved in this file. We have not made the progress that we hoped to make, but we continue to seek ways in which we can advance the interests of Canadian producers.

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**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Bob Wood (Nipissing):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

Last week we were shocked to learn that a dam near Elk Lake in northern Ontario broke, spilling what one newspaper account called 10,000 dump truck loads of old mine tailings containing cyanide, arsenic, lead and mercury, into the Montreal River. This is a major disaster for northern Ontario.

What is the minister going to do about it?

**Hon. Robert de Cotret (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, we are quite concerned with this spill situation. Through conversations with the ministry of the environment of Ontario and through press reports we see that there is extensive damage.

We have offered to be of help in the situation, but the hon. member must recognize that this is a matter for the provincial government to deal with. Should it want to indicate that this is a disaster situation then that would obviously trigger federal help in the issue.

**Mr. Bob Wood (Nipissing):** Mr. Speaker, many residents in communities along that particular river have been told not to drink their water. I think it is either a responsibility or a shared responsibility of the ministry to seek some kind of action.

My supplementary question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Northern Ontario has literally thousands of old mines that have been closed down, similar to the one in question.

Is the minister monitoring these other closed mines to ensure that that kind of disaster does not happen again in the future? If not, will he commit the House to undertake such an endeavour?

**Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's question.

The monitoring under the mines act comes under the responsibility of the provincial government. I am also pleased that my parliamentary secretary phoned the provincial Government of Ontario, asking it to get on with monitoring the work. I appreciate the work that he has done.

I would hope that the provincial government of the NDP, having said what it said in the past about the environment, will now get on with the job and the responsibilities it has.

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**HOUSING**

**Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Housing.

In federally subsidized co-op housing projects across this country, 9 per cent of the units are occupied by high income Canadians, those earning over \$50,000 per year.

This is an abuse of a program meant for low and medium income Canadians, effectively shutting out the homeless and many needy Canadians from affordable housing.

Will the minister give consideration to either a policy of encouraging high income Canadians to move out of these co-op projects or a policy of charging them market rents?

**Hon. Alan Redway (Minister of State (Housing):** Mr. Speaker, the question asked by the hon. member is one that is being asked by many Canadians: when so many low income Canadians are on waiting lists for assisted housing and housing dollars are scarce and understandably Canadians do not want to pay any more taxes, is it