

Oral Questions

● (1420)

Mr. Hees: A supplementary question—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for a last supplementary for the time being. If hon. members wish to pursue this line of questioning later, they will be recognized for that purpose, but after this last supplementary the Chair will recognize the hon. member for Assiniboia.

Mr. Hees: Would the minister explain why it was found necessary to pay in the city of Montreal three times the amount that was paid for similar accommodation in Toronto?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): I have already indicated that similar accommodation in the general vicinity in Montreal was either more expensive or just slightly less or just about right on with what was paid in Montreal. If the hon. member does not wish to compare similar sites in Montreal but to compare Montreal with Toronto, I point out that the shortage of space on the first floor level in downtown Montreal was far more critical than in Toronto where there was a surplus. There was a soft market in Toronto at that particular time, quite the opposite of the market situation in Montreal.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Baldwin: By gosh, the price was right.

Mr. Hees: We know what went on.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

ALLEGATION THAT GRANT TO HERMES ELECTRONICS DID NOT CREATE NEW PRODUCTION OR JOBS

Mr. Bill Knight (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. It relates to the last report of the Auditor General and in particular to the incentive grant of some \$570,000 given in 1970 and 1971 to a corporation unnamed in the report which, according to my information, is Hermes Electronics. In view of the fact the Auditor General's report has been tabled for several weeks, can the minister inform the House whether he has investigated the statement of the Auditor General that, contrary to the Regional Development Incentives Act, the grant did not help to create any new production facilities nor did it create the 395 jobs the minister has reported to parliament?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I do not believe you will permit me the time to answer the question in detail. I can say, in terms of new jobs being created, the assessment is probably incorrect because the application was not intended for that purpose. It was intended in fact to preserve the 375 jobs, or thereabouts, which would otherwise have been eliminated as the plant closed down.

Mr. Knight: In view of the fact that the act does not provide for that, I ask the minister the following question.

[Mr. Munro (Hamilton East).]

Will the minister inform the House whether he will look into the role in this transaction of Mr. Douglas Kendall, who is not only a senior executive of Hermes Electronics but also chairman of the General Adjustment Assistance Board of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce and a board member of the Canadian Development Corporation, and into the role of Mr. Robert A. Wisener who, in addition to being a board member of Hermes Electronics—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member is now making a speech rather than asking a question.

An hon. Member: It is a good question.

An hon. Member: Why can't he ask it?

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. member rising on a point of order?

Mr. Knight: The minister was about to reply and I think he should be given an opportunity. I believe my question is quite in order.

Mr. Speaker: The objection of the Chair, of course, was to the length of the hon. member's question. I was suggesting to him that his supplementary was rather lengthy. If the minister can reply briefly he will be recognized for that purpose, after which the Chair will recognize the hon. member for Témiscamingue.

Mr. Jamieson: I did not hear the last part of the hon. gentleman's question, but to the extent that I did hear it may I say that the information I have is that the gentlemen named had no connection whatsoever with this particular matter. However, I will be glad to look into it further.

[Later:]

Mr. Knight: Mr. Speaker, I promise to ask one last supplementary. It is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. The question also relates to the latest report by the Auditor General. Will the minister inform the House why he has not collected the debt of some \$100,000 which Hermes Electronics, according to the Auditor General, owes to the federal treasury according to an agreement reached with that corporation under the defence industry production program, and will he inform the House whether or not he is going to take steps in the near future to collect this money?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would think that question could have been placed on the order paper, at least the second supplementary.

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[Translation]

INQUIRY OF THE MINISTRY

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Solicitor General.

In view of his intention to abolish, to all intents and purposes capital punishment in this country, and in view of the considerable number of murders committed in Canada over the weekend, does the minister intend to