

SUGGESTION MINISTER SEEK DELAY IN LAY-OFFS AT INCO

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): I shall be checking the minister's statement with care and I am sure I shall be rising later on a question of privilege. The minister has said these firms are not using in countries abroad the tax benefits to which I have alluded. I can demonstrate clearly that he is wrong. They are. If they are getting \$300 in Canada and investing abroad, what does it matter in terms of bookkeeping entries where they get the money if they are spending it abroad? If INCO corporation is getting all these benefits from the taxpayers of Canada, including those in the present budget, will the minister have enough sense to call the head of that corporation to Ottawa and insist that the corporation reverse its decision to lay off workers, at least until some alternative course can be worked out?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): I do not believe the hon. member is very aware of the situation. The INCO corporation has already stockpiled reserves sufficient for seven months. The problem is that the world market is very soft. There is a cutback around the world at this time; it is not only in Canada. We have to live with that situation and the people have to realize the situation. We have to compete with other nations and if we are not in a position to compete we are losing jobs. That is a fact. The hon. member can put his head in the sand as much as he wishes but every country in the world is stuck with that situation and I cannot do anything if the hon. member cannot cope with reality.

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● (1132)

[Translation]

HOUSING

INQUIRY WHETHER SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR RENOVATION OF URBAN DWELLINGS

Mr. Gilles Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs.

In the last few months, the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation has been refusing applications made by parishes and villages in designated areas by saying that such applications cannot be accepted before 1981 or 1982, within the framework of renovation of houses. At the same time, in the regions already designated, home owners have sent in applications a year ago and in some cases two years ago. Those are also refused and applicants are told that perhaps next year their applications may be analyzed. Following the minibudget introduced yesterday by his colleague the Minister of Finance, can the minister inform the House whether supplementary funds will be earmarked for this urban renovation project?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): The budget for the program the hon. member is talking about has been tripled over an eighteen-month period. On the other hand, I would like to make a correction concerning the state-

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ment of the hon. member to the effect that Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation is the one that refuses to give municipalities the possibility of assistance for urban renovation. That decision falls exclusively to the provincial authorities and all the municipalities whose applications were not accepted but were turned down by the Quebec government.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, on a supplementary.

Contrary to what the minister has just said, the letters from the Quebec departments and the Quebec Housing Corporation say that the province of Quebec accepts that they be designated. Follows a letter from the department of municipal affairs supporting the application, and the blame is put on CMHC. In fact, the replies followed meetings with the CMHC in my area, the Val-d'Or region. I should like to know whether the minister is to check the facts and give instructions or at least additional funds to an area such as ours which is very much underprivileged, or perhaps I should say blessed with unemployment?

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is willing to send me the correspondence, I shall be pleased to look further into the matter and see exactly what the situation is. I am convinced that if the Quebec authorities are willing to designate some municipalities as eligible for assistance under the housing renewal program, CMHC will be only too eager to go ahead and set up a program in the designated communities.

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): Another supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I am prepared to admit that the provincial government accepts that but there is still a problem since there are no funds. That is the answer given to municipalities. We should know, therefore, if the minister has sufficient funds or if the Minister of Finance granted him more money so as to make it possible to designate those areas?

Mr. Ouellet: We have the necessary funds to satisfy demand, and I would like the hon. member to tell me what municipalities have received information from the Quebec government to the effect that they were recognized for renovation purposes. The moment I receive this information, I will gladly check to see if there was indeed correspondence between the government of Quebec and my department about the designation of those municipalities.

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[English]

TRADE

ACTION TO REGAIN CANADA'S SHARE OF NICKEL MARKET

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. As the minister directly responsible for maintaining and increasing industrial production in this country, I would ask him whether he has been in touch with the management of INCO to ask them very strongly whether they would