

**Miss Bégin:** As far as I can remember, Mr. Speaker, I answered that question when I rose on a question of privilege last Wednesday.

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[English]

## HOUSING

### RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM— INCLUSION OF ROOMING HOUSES

**Mr. Art Lee (Vancouver East):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Urban Affairs, but in his absence I will address it to his parliamentary secretary. In view of his minister's commitment to include private rooming houses under the residential rehabilitation assistance program which was made some time ago, can the parliamentary secretary assure the House that he will effect such change through legislation at the earliest possible moment?

**Mr. Maurice Harquail (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State for Urban Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, first of all I should like to thank the hon. member for Vancouver East for bringing this question forward to the House. This matter was discussed and focused upon at the Habitat conference in his very own city of Vancouver. I would assure the hon. member and all hon. members of the House that it is the minister's intention to bring forward amendments to the legislation in view of the limit of \$500 under the present program.

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## INDUSTRY

### ALCAN FLUORSPAR OPERATION AT ST. LAWRENCE, NEWFOUNDLAND—REQUEST FOR REPORT ON NEGOTIATIONS TO AVOID LAY-OFFS

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs and perhaps he will thank me for my question as well. As the minister knows, the House is currently debating a bill which gives about \$1 billion in tax concessions to corporations ostensibly to create jobs. Considering that the Alcan corporation has responded to this and it will get about \$11 million assistance from the government by laying off some 400 people at St. Lawrence at their fluorspar operation, I would ask the minister, who has been directly involved in negotiations with the company, I understand, whether he has anything to report to the House; and specifically can he tell the House whether the company has changed its mind and will keep that plant in operation?

**Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I think it may be drawing a long bow to have me answer this question in my ministerial capacity. I am happy to do so, however, with your permission because it is a matter which affects my own constituency and, as the hon. member says, several hundred workers there. I had meetings

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on the weekend in connection with this matter, and regrettably I do not see any likelihood that the Alcan corporation is going to change its mind. I equally say that it is a quite shocking situation that in fact they have shown so little concern for the workers in that particular operation, but rather than cry, as it were, over events which cannot be turned around, we are looking for, and I hope can find, alternative employment for those affected.

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## FINANCE

### SUGGESTED DENIAL OF TAX CONCESSIONS TO ALCAN IN VIEW OF CLOSING OF OPERATIONS IN NEWFOUNDLAND

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Finance. Considering that his colleague has just acknowledged that a corporation which is going to receive, out of the minister's present budgetary proposals which we are debating in the House today, \$11 million, and is supposed to be involved in job creation yet is shutting down operations, not because it is losing money it is important to note, but because it can make more profit importing from Mexico, will the Minister of Finance consider retaliatory action to stop this company behaving in this way?

[Translation]

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I have already answered that kind of question. We have a tax system which applies to all companies and it may happen that some of them might be forced to cease their activities at this moment. However, I do not think that we could use the tax system to punish some and not others. The law is the same for everybody and we regret that company has taken that decision. However, I have investigated the matter myself and the hon. member's allegation that they had to do so in favour of another operation is not correct, because the mineral they extracted cannot replace the one they get out of the country for their operation.

[English]

**Mr. Broadbent:** A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I want to get it very clearly from the finance minister. Is he saying that this corporation can respond in this way, a corporation which is making hundreds of millions of dollars profit annually and which has benefited from the labour of people in that town for many, many decades, and that there is nothing the government of Canada can do in face of that action by the corporation?

[Translation]

**Mr. Chrétien:** The answer is no, Mr. Speaker.