

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I met with the steelworkers a couple of weeks ago in Toronto, and one view among them was that they were quite happy with the efforts this government is deploying to help them adapt to the changes that are happening in their industry.

If the hon. member would like to get details of all the assistance we have given the steelworkers I would be pleased to provide it for her.

**Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, if the minister really believes he is doing enough for the Canadian steel industry then he is totally out of touch with reality.

This government promised free trade would bring jobs to Hamilton. In fact, we have lost thousands of jobs in the steel industry alone. The American steel industry's threatened trade actions against Canada will make the situation even worse.

This government has not resolved the trade dispute. It has run out of money for job retraining. What is the minister prepared to do for the unemployed in Hamilton, except talk through his hat?

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I share the member's concern for the steel workers. That is why with CSTEAC we have entered into an agreement where I and my predecessor have committed very substantial amounts of money to help these workers retrain and adapt to the restructuring that is taking place.

The member talks about the steel industry. Mr. Fred Telmer of Stelco Inc. made a comment that is quoted in the *Hamilton Spectator* which I invite her to read. He says: "Indeed, during the first quarter of this year, steel shipments were up 3 per cent, making a 5 per cent year-over-year increase quite feasible. Canadian steel-makers and their customers are also benefiting from interest rates that are at their lowest level in 19 years". That we owe to the economic policy of this Minister of Finance.

\* \* \*

**JOB TRAINING**

**Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Two weeks ago the minister confirmed that his department would honour the retraining commitments for 1992 that were made to the workers of both the Abitibi and Red Rock mills in Thunder Bay and in Red Rock. He further undertook at that time to review the retraining commitments that had been made to those workers for the years 1993 and 1994.

Would the minister be prepared to give us a status report as to the funding that will be available for those commitments made by his people for the retraining programs to Red Rock and Thunder Bay for 1993 and 1994?

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, the government is in the process of finalizing a plan that will provide additional funds for developmental use this year. In order to achieve this, we will be reallocating funds to meet what is clearly a government priority. I should be able in the next few days, I hope, to be able to apprise members of the House and Canadians of these changes that will help meet this heavy demand for training on the part of unemployed people.

**Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon):** A supplementary, if I may, to the same minister. Let me just say that the people of Thunder Bay appreciate the extra added effort that the minister has shown for those unfortunate workers in Thunder Bay and Red Rock.

However, since our last meeting further permanent layoffs have been announced, mainly because of the policy for downsizing the shipbuilding industry in Canada.

My question to the minister would be what plans does his ministry have to make commitments to those unemployed workers who have not yet had commitments made with respect to retraining?

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member I am sure would agree with me that what we cannot do, nor should we do, is put every UI recipient on training.

What we have to do, what we can do and what we want to do, however, is to make sure that those who most need training get it. In the case of further layoffs in the area that my hon. friend mentions, adjustment committees are being set up in order to work with both the labour and the business side of the equation in order to find ways where we can help those workers. The hon. member can be assured that in the case of these other lay-offs they will get as fair treatment as we can muster for their benefit.