

Adjournment Debate

in its view, happened, or to tell us what it is doing to see that this does not happen again.

Last week the Minister was asked if he could assure the House that the deficiencies the board in the United States found to be the cause of the tragedy had been corrected. He was asked if he could assure the House that proper safety procedures are being followed and that proper equipment for the men on the oil rigs is available? His astounding answer is recorded at p. 22649 of *Hansard* as follows:

Madam Speaker, I cannot, and I am sorry about that.

Hundreds of thousands of people are sorry about that, Mr. Speaker. How could a Minister stand in this House a year after the tragedy and not be able to assure the people of Canada that proper safety procedures are now being followed, that proper equipment is now being used on the oil rigs and that the deficiencies have been corrected?

Today when I had a chance to question the Minister again, he frankly admitted that he knew nothing about it and asked me to direct my question to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Dingwall). He knew nothing about it. When given an opportunity to say that steps have been taken by the Government, the parliamentary secretary said nothing, he knew nothing, he acted like a know-nothing and, in fact, he said that I had never raised the issue before. If he goes into the files in his Department he will see the letters that I wrote to the Minister of the day, that fugitive from energy who is now in finance. I wrote on May 4 last year, on June 3 last year, on July 28 last year, asking him to refer these matters to the proper parliamentary committee so that he could bring the public and Parliament up to date on what steps the Government had taken to change the regulations and the inspection procedures: has he appointed more inspectors; are they now ensuring that ballast training is being given? The Minister wrote me on September 9 and coolly refused to do that. He said it might invite partisan wrangling in the House. He said a Royal Commission had been appointed to look into the matters. We are not interested in waiting another two or three years for a Royal Commission report while everybody has gone to sleep, with perhaps another tragedy occurring, Mr. Speaker.

● (1810)

We want to know from the Government now what regulations it has changed and how. Is COGLA negligent or not negligent? What inspection procedures has it changed or how? What training courses is the Government now insisting on? I am told that there is still no course required for ballast control operators—there is still no course required by the Government. They are supposed to take a two-week stability course, but there are no written guidelines for such a course. The officials cannot say whether rig personnel might have to undergo a certification program similar to the requirements of the Department of Transport. They require ship officers to have at least a two-year program in ballast control when they go on ships. What kind of administration is this? It is criminal negligence.

The people who have brothers and fathers working on oil rigs are entitled to know from the Government what steps it has taken in the last year to change the situation. The Government claimed to have jurisdiction. The Minister of Transport, who deals with maritime matters, the sea and marine matters, rose in the House last week pretending he knew everything, but giving us no assurances; and this week he rose to say that it is not his jurisdiction, that it is the jurisdiction of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. What do they know in the Department of Energy about marine stability and ballast controls? Surely that is the province of the Ministry of Transport.

When the Parliamentary Secretary answers me today, I implore him to tell the House that the answer of the Minister of Transport of last Wednesday was incorrect, that the Government can and will give assurances that proper safety procedures are now being followed, and give assurance on behalf of the Government that proper equipment is now available on oil rigs and that the deficiencies of the National Transportation Board have now been corrected. That is his duty. If he cannot do that, then he and the Minister of Transport should resign because they should not have the effrontery or the gall to stand in the House one year later and not be able to give those assurances when there are hundreds of men out on the rigs today.

We had a storm just two days ago in Newfoundland. It was not as bad as the one last year. We will have more storms this year. This Government which claims jurisdiction cannot give Canadian people the assurance that it has made changes.

We are in the shameful situation where the United States, a foreign Government agency, gives a report and we get nothing; when the Members of the sovereign House cannot get Ministers to come before committees to answer. The Minister has said that he will come before the Committee. He cannot do that too soon. He must do so next week.

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has asked what changes in procedures have been implemented to prevent a recurrence of what we all know as the *Ocean Ranger* tragedy. I am pleased to advise the Hon. Member on this matter and to reassure workers who are employed in offshore operations of the safety measures which are in force.

All workers on offshore drillships and related equipment have been provided with survival suits. Rescue boat equipment has been upgraded. Marine emergency training has been accelerated. These types of measures will ensure survival in the unlikely event of an accident.

The qualifications of all supervisory personnel employed in offshore operations have been reviewed and assessed. This is an ongoing procedure to ensure that all persons in control of an operation are thoroughly trained in all of its phases.

Operators of offshore drilling rigs are required to ensure the safety of their equipment through thorough inspections and a certification process. The inspections are carried out by