

the CANMET review made it clear that the mine was technically feasible.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I come from a mining area. The minister was in that area very recently. Yes, all coal mines are dangerous. However, a mining area that has cost over 240 deaths in the previous period is obviously much more dangerous.

Therefore, the government knew it was not just an ordinary coal mining area.

My supplementary question is this. In December 1990, I tried to get the correspondence between ministers and between officials on this very aspect by tabling a question on the Order Paper.

That correspondence was not tabled in the House yesterday. The government has the ability to table that information. If it will not table it in this House, will it guarantee that all of that correspondence—absolutely all of that correspondence—will be made available to the various inquiries?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, there are three separate points to the hon. member's question.

The first point essentially is why, given the tragedy that occurred, did the government guarantee a loan to have the mine start in the first place. Those reasons are clear to the House just from the questions today about unemployment. That part of Nova Scotia had very high unemployment, and there was a provincial economic development priority. I know his party believes in economic development in the regions where there is high unemployment. That is one reason why this particular mine was looked at.

We studied very carefully the possibilities of doing it as long as it was viewed as being technically feasible. In fact, that is what all the documents made clear yesterday. The CANMET review of all the technical studies says this mine is technically feasible, and then it made some other recommendations as well.

In terms of communications beyond what I have tabled in the House yesterday, our role as a financial guarantor of the loan puts us into a position of being concerned with it from a technical point of view and from a financial

point of view. There will be some more documents tabled along that line as well.

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BANKING

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

The minister is aware of the fact that in an effort to provide the necessary financing for Canadian exporters to help create jobs in Canada, the Royal Bank has applied for a banking charter in China. He also knows that approval of that banking charter is contingent upon the minister signing the application for the Bank of China to have a Canadian banking charter.

Does the minister intend to sign the application of the Bank of China? If so, when?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

The Minister of Finance has forwarded a letter to the Bank of China, giving it approval in principle for establishing a bank here in Canada. Our banking regulations require that the Bank of China now must advertise over a 30-day period establishing a Schedule II bank here in Canada.

There is a 30-day waiting period following that for comments on its application. Following that, it would apply for certification to the Minister of Finance.

The letter was forwarded, as I said, April 30 by the Minister of Finance. The procedure is well under way.

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WESTRAY MINE

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, the failure of the Government of Canada to exercise prudent and due diligence in the Westray coal mining project has unfortunately resulted in a national disaster.

The government's own documents as tabled yesterday recommended: "The Department of Industry, Science and Technology consider more in-depth geological mining process, economic evaluation of the type undertaken by commercial lending institutions on projects of this magnitude".