

Oral Questions

The monitoring, inspecting, all of that was the responsibility of two departments, the Department of Labour and the Department of Mines and Energy in the province of Nova Scotia. Therefore something went wrong. The hon. member is quite right. Something went wrong. What went wrong? The commission of inquiry in Nova Scotia is going to help us find out what that is.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Madam Speaker, the minister has obviously been in office too long. He has forgotten how to ask questions. That is all he had to do.

The minister has made repeated references to receiving regular safety reports from his independent mining consultants or the consultants of the Bank of Nova Scotia. In today's Halifax *The Daily News*, Keith McCandlish, who is a geologist with Associated Mining Consultants in Calgary, said his firm wrote 18 reports for the bank between August 1990 and May 1992. As a courtesy he said: "Five of them were passed along to the federal Department of Industry, Science and Technology as a courtesy. Our function was not to monitor safety on a direct basis".

Who is telling the truth here? The minister or the consultants who performed and reported the inspections? Come clean.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, I can help the hon. member with his question if he will listen carefully.

The job of the independent mining consultants was to make sure we received on a regular basis certificates of compliance, that we knew that this mine and that Curragh were complying with provincial statutes and regulations.

• (1140)

That was part of the monthly certifications we received from the independent mining consultants. In fact it was confirmed today in the very quotation that the hon. member makes. The day to day inspections of this mine was the job of the province of Nova Scotia through its inspectors, through its two government departments. That is what the committee of inquiry is looking into.

TRADE

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

We all heard the President of the United States say yesterday that he was just a phone call away from the Prime Minister on trade disputes.

I would like to ask the Deputy Prime Minister: did the phone go dead on Honda? Did the phone go dead on softwood lumber? Did the phone go dead on magnesium? Why is it that the only thing the Prime Minister came away with from Washington was a ringing endorsement from Dan Quayle?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, I think if my hon. friend read the press reports in Washington as well as here, she would understand that the Prime Minister had a very effective meeting with the President of the United States. The matter of the trade disputes that are there between us is going to be handled very effectively in the future.

We have had some difficulties. That is one of the reasons why the Prime Minister has raised these matters with the President. The conclusion we have seen from this meeting is that those matters will be handled more effectively in the future by the United States.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, I did hear the press reports and I heard the President and the Prime Minister being compared to the fathers of free trade.

For my part, I would like to say that if they are the fathers of free trade, I would rather be the child of Murphy Brown.

[*Translation*]

I have not heard the Prime Minister state that the American government will abandon its action on Honda automobiles, that it will abandon its action on softwood lumber, that it will abandon its action on magnesium.

What did the Prime Minister really accomplish in Washington during his visit? Was it nothing else but a photo opportunity?