

Oral Questions

• (1150)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): No, Mr. Speaker, I will not apologize for Canadian workers who are seeing private sector companies not investing enough in their skills in Canada because skills are the success of a competitive economy.

No, I will not apologize because German corporations spend eight times more than Canadian corporations, the Americans spend twice as much and the Japanese spend five times as much. What they agree on is that they have to spend more to help people acquire the skills needed in a competitive world.

I hear the rhetoric of the member. I think we should find another club. It will be the same—

Mr. Speaker: I think we have to proceed.

* * *

WHITBY HARBOUR

Mr. René Soetens (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, for six years a boat was anchored in Whitby harbour, a boat that was derelict, unsightly, unsafe, a possible environmental hazard, among other things. As of this week it has finally been towed out of Whitby harbour to some other unknown destination.

Will the Minister of Transport come forward with regulations that will prevent a vessel of this type being tied up along any pier regulated by the Department of Transport in Canada ever again?

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

The department is very aware of this issue. I think his constituents have been well represented on this issue. The member has expressed the concern a number of times.

The concern here is that in cases like this the government is constrained to ensuring the vessel in question is safe or does not present an environmental danger. There are very real constraints to our ability to order a private owner to move a vessel.

I can only say that the government has looked into the matter. The vessel has now been removed through the

impetus and efforts of the hon. member. We are reviewing the regulations with a view to resolving these matters more quickly in the future.

* * *

WESTRAY MINE

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Question Period my leader read from the CANMET study with regard to Westray and pointed out that with regard to the ventilation section and methane that the test does not give one confidence.

The minister in response said that the studies were outdated. Yet in 1990 in the professional magazine *Northern Miner* it referred to the inspection of Westray and said: "The potential for spontaneous combustion underground has not been clearly assessed".

The minister in the House has said that the government was not necessarily concerned with safety. It perceived that to be a provincial responsibility. I would ask the minister this: If you are making an economic investment, why would you not look at this information about the danger signals and realize that there is a real potential that your investment is in danger?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the truth is that with every investment and every underground coal mine that has ever been done, there has always been the danger of methane. That exists for all coal-mining investments.

What is different here is that there were a host of studies to try to assess whether the whole project would be economically and technically feasible.

The CANMET review is a review of all of those studies: the Dames and Moore study, the AMCL report in March, 1988, the Placer reports, the Hacquebard review, the Kilborn review and all other technical studies that led up to the decision by the company to go ahead with the mine. All of those reviews looked at the questions to which my hon. friend refers. The reviews all made it clear that the methane problem was either a small problem or a moderate problem or it might be more than that. All of them were looked at. They had to be included as part of the technical review. The fact is that they were and the decision was made by the mine to go ahead because the technical studies summarized by