

Inquiries of the Ministry

send copies of my recent speeches to the hon. member, for example, on the inauguration of the Export Development Corporation.

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, I have read the minister's speeches and there is nothing in them to indicate that any steps at all are to be taken to increase our trade in any way whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

NATIONAL DEFENCE**ACCIDENT ABOARD DESTROYER ESCORT
"KOOTENAY"**

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, in the unavoidable absence of the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall) may I direct a question to the Minister of National Defence about yesterday's tragic accident aboard the Canadian Forces destroyer escort *Kootenay*. Before I ask my question perhaps I might be permitted to express to the next of kin of those who lost their lives and to the survivors who were injured the sympathy of the House generally and especially the sympathy of the subcommittee which visited this vessel just before it sailed. My question is: Has the minister anything further to report on this unfortunate accident? Specifically, what action has been taken to prevent any possibility of the recurrence of similar accidents on destroyer escorts?

Hon. Léo Cadieux (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, first may I join with the hon. member in expressing our deep sorrow to the families affected by the accident. This unfortunate accident brings home to all of us the hazards and dangers which servicemen in the performance of their duties must face. This is not always appreciated. An investigation is under way into the accident. So far we do not have all the facts. I am told that it was a boiler room explosion. These accidents are likely to happen if something goes wrong, although we do not know exactly what went wrong. There is no further information on the matter except that the next of kin are preparing to be flown to the scene. We have had one request from next of kin that one victim of the accident be buried at sea. We have had no expression of requirements from other next of kin.

[Mr. Pepin.]

INDUSTRY**COPPER SHORTAGE—ACTION TO ASSIST
CANADIAN MANUFACTURERS**

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In view of the shortage of copper being experienced by the Canadian fabricating industry, can the minister say when he will take steps which on April 1 of this year he said he would take in this eventuality?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, there is some confusion in this matter which I should like to rectify if I may. In April last I tried to prevent the drain of copper from Canada, as a result of the higher price available for it on the London Metal Exchange.

I asked Canadian producers to take care of their usual Canadian clients at the North American price. I more or less froze the situation at that time, and this action is still very much valid.

The present situation is different. Because a strike is taking place I am now asked by some people to force Canadian companies not affected by the strike to drop their usual foreign clients and to sell copper here in Canada on a temporary basis, presumably, at prices lower than those they are obtaining now in foreign markets at a time when copper is available in Canada at the higher price.

So this is an entirely different situation, and I do not think the reference to my April 1 statement in the present circumstances is justified.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Whether or not the minister likes the reference to his April 1 statement, will he, in view of the serious situation and the unemployment being created by this condition, look into it further and make a statement to the House next week?

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, this is a most difficult situation. I sympathize with the employees of Canadian copper user companies as well as the Companies. The Companies have to pay the higher prices. At the same time I must try, I think, to preserve the reputation of Canada as a dependable exporter. I am weighing the advantages and disadvantages of both sides of the dilemma, but in the present situation I think we had better not mess around with present patterns of distribution of copper. I am not saying, however,