

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister and concerns the Westray affair.

The Deputy Prime Minister will be aware of yesterday's report that the shredders have been busy at the office of Westray Coal. Further to these reports, I have a copy here of a Westray Coal interoffice memo on security procedures which instructs all employees on shredding procedures and use of cellular phones.

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Considering the seriousness of this tragic matter and the need for all information to be both secure and available for scrutiny by both the Nova Scotia inquiry and this Parliament, can the Deputy Prime Minister assure us that the RCMP has been instructed to seize and secure all Westray files and are these files now so secured?

**Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that he is quoting, at best, hearsay comments from the leader of the NDP in Nova Scotia when he talks about shredders. He does not know if that is true or not. But he should know that question should quite properly be asked by the leader of the NDP in the Nova Scotia legislature.

As a participant in a financial transaction, we guaranteed a loan. On a monthly basis we fulfilled our concern that the health and safety requirements were being followed. That is the federal government's role. The role now is for the judicial inquiry to inquire into the kinds of questions he is asking.

**Mr. Speaker:** Before the hon. member asks the next question, I listened very carefully to that one and the answer when the minister responded. I want hon. members to keep in mind—and the hon. member is pursuing a serious matter—that the administration of justice is a provincial matter. I think that if there are further questions to the federal government as to why it has not or has done something with respect to the RCMP it may very well be out of order.

I caution the hon. member, but of course I will hear his question.

• (1440)

**Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke):** Mr. Speaker, I fully accept the comments you have just

made, but I would also point out to the government that when it makes a major investment and guarantees 85 per cent of a \$100 million loan in a project which ends up sacrificing the lives of 26 Nova Scotia miners, there is no limit to public responsibility.

I would be quite happy to table the document to which I have referred. Further to that I have a question for the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism.

Yesterday the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism told the House that the federal government was relying on mine inspections done for the Bank of Nova Scotia for its information on safety. Our latest information is that Associated Mining Consultants did not do comprehensive mine inspections but rather relied on safety inspections done by Westray itself.

Can the minister confirm this and will he table in this House all of the inspection reports he claimed the federal government received from the Bank of Nova Scotia, which to remind the minister, was covered to the tune of 85 per cent of any loans extended to Westray under the provisions of this cosy deal with the federal government?

**Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend characterizes the loan to Westray as a cosy deal. The federal government has also made a very substantial loan to Cominco in his riding. It is also a mine. Does he call that a cosy deal as well?

**Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism.

Yesterday the minister stated in this House: "We would not have put our Westray guarantee in place unless there was compliance with the health and safety requirements of the two departments which were going to administer it for the province, for the Government of Nova Scotia". We know that the government's own agency, Devco, told it Westray was not safe.

What specific assurances did the province of Nova Scotia provide to convince his government to disregard the concerns of its own Crown corporation as to the safety of this project?