

Message from the Senate

homemade conciliation effort by an official from the Department. No conciliation commissioner, much less a mediator, has been appointed.

I would like to ask my question . . .

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): . . . for the benefit of my "interrupters" opposite. I want to ask the Government to inform the House whether consumers should expect to face these problems for some time yet, or does the Government intend to take some kind of action to help reach a settlement? What does the Government intend to do to put an end to this strike? When is the Government going to wake up and help Quebec consumers, despite those turkeys who are trying to interrupt me?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I understand that Bell Canada has indicated that continuation of the TDD service for the hearing impaired will have top priority during the strike.

Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that management personnel are replacing striking operators in order to provide a much needed service, for the handicapped.

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[English]

DISASTERS**NORTH SEA OIL RIG EXPLOSION—LOSS OF CANADIAN LIVES**

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister. I spoke a few moments ago by telephone to a father in Vancouver who lost his son on the Piper ALPHA Platform which blew up in the North Sea a little while ago. He indicated to me he has some serious concerns about the safety measures which were not taken.

Given the difficulty of an ordinary Canadian affording representation at any inquiry, for example, in Aberdeen, would the Government consider giving legal representation to the two Canadian families involved? And would the Government admit there is also a national interest for Canada because if we start Hibernia, we will have oil rigs out there in very dangerous situations? Would the Government be prepared to consider giving representation to two ordinary Canadians and their families at that inquiry so the families could feel justice could be done as much as that is possible now for their loved ones who were lost?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the Hon. Member that the concern of the Government for safety measures is ongoing. We have on our East Coast, particularly with respect to Hibernia and to developments there, some of the strictest safety measures in

place in the world. That is not to say that at any time they cannot be improved. Suggestions coming from individuals and organizations would certainly be studied.

I cannot give the Hon. Member an assurance that certain individuals could go to specific hearings, but I can assure him that if he would see that their concerns are channelled to the Government, we will see they are given consideration.

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MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE**SPEAKER'S RULING ON BILL C-103**

Mr. Speaker: I want to bring to the attention of Hon. Members that on Friday last there was some discussion in this Chamber as to a certain action taken by the other place, and for those uninitiated that means the Honourable the Senate, with respect to a Bill which after having passed in this place was sent to the Senate.

In the interests of Hon. Members, but especially in the interests of the public who are watching and listening, I want to just in very simple language explain what happens because I have a technical ruling and it just may be that the public of this country, which ought to understand what we are doing here, will find it easier to follow if I give a brief explanation in layman's language, if I can put it that way.

What happened was simply that a Bill numbered Bill C-103, which is a Bill respecting economic development in Atlantic Canada, was passed by this House in all stages and was sent to the Senate, as is the normal procedure. When it was being considered by the Senate, the Senate decided, for whatever reason, to split the Bill, in other words to break it into two parts, and the Senate sent back to this House one part of the Bill. There was much argument in the House Friday as to whether or not this was justified. It is not for the Speaker to say whether or not on any substantive reason there was any logical justification for it.

● (1510)

Essentially, that is the point that the Speaker has been asked to comment upon, that is, whether it is under our system appropriate for the Honourable The Senate to take a Bill that has passed this place and to break it into two parts and send back one-half of the Bill, especially when it is a money Bill which requires at its very beginning the Royal Recommendation for the expenditure of funds.

As I have said, that is a layman's explanation. It is important that all Canadians understand just exactly what it is the Chair has been asked to do in this particular case. I am now going to get into the formal part of the ruling. I will try not to keep the House too long. I hope that given this explanation it will be clear to everybody just exactly what has happened here and what the response of the Chair is in this ruling and the