

Adjournment Debate

Could the minister state yes or no whether he intends to release to the public or to this House the MOT and the DND reports which refer to the *Lee Wang Zin*? If the answer is no, could the minister explain why the public should not be entitled to the information contained in those reports?

Finally, I understand the minister will be submitting for approval to the cabinet the national SAR plan, if it is essentially updated from 1979-80, which never did reach the cabinet. It would extend, presumably, to the year 1985. When we examine that data, the data sheets in this report for Campbell River, Johnstone Straits, Queen Charlotte Sound, Hecate Strait, Queen Charlotte Islands, Vancouver Island West and the North Pacific, we find that there is only one piece of primary search and rescue equipment in that entire area. It is a 44-foot self-righting lifeboat that goes 12 miles an hour which covers 350 miles of the west coast and presumably 200 miles out to sea. This is clearly inadequate. In spite of that report, in spite of dramatic increases in population, it underestimates private and commercial activity. It does not give any mention of aircraft flights and increased traffic volumes and the government still cannot, with any degree of reliability, provide a rescue vessel in that area. This situation has not been changed for years.

I would ask the minister to release those reports. I would urge him to commit the necessary resources to distribute the helicopters at Comox along the coast of B.C. so they can be effectively deployed. I would urge him to upgrade the national SAR plan to provide immediate resources to the central and northern coasts of B.C. and, at the same time, to approve expenditure of funds for immediate use to prevent the crippling and time consuming process of bouncing important programs back and forth between cabinet, Treasury Board, and the departments over and over again.

Mrs. Ursula Appoloni (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, in his reply on May 5, 1980, the minister stated that our search and rescue program has been improved in recent years, and we are continuing to improve it.

Under the search and rescue capability update program, 11 Canadian forces helicopters will undergo modifications to upgrade their capability for search and rescue operations. The modifications to the helicopters, six Labradors and five Voyagers, include the installation of external long-range fuel tanks, rescue hoists, new radar and improved communications equipment. These improvements will extend the range of the

aircraft and will enable them to fly search and rescue missions in adverse weather, day or night, throughout the 200-mile offshore limit.

The improvement program, to be completed by June, 1984, is part of a two-phase program. The first phase which began in 1978 consisted of improvements in the navigation avionics, communications and the installation of high-powered search lights.

A significant improvement in Canada's search and rescue capabilities is its participation with the United States and France in an international search and rescue satellite program called SARSAT. The first launch is scheduled for mid-1982.

● (2230)

Also, an interdepartmental working group has been formed under the auspices of the Interdepartmental Committee on Search and Rescue to ensure availability of reliable emergency locator transmitters, ELTs, by recommending methods for accelerating the reintroduction of existing ELTs into the general aviation category and to identify plans for the technological improvement of locator transmitters including their wider use and compatibility with SARSAT.

On this subject, I would refer the hon. member to the appendix of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence of December 4, 1979.

As regards reports on the sinking of the *Lee Wang Zin*, I can assure the hon. member that the recommendations in those reports which we are able to act upon will be implemented. Also, the minister explained in his letter of May 27, 1980, to the hon. member the nature of such investigations and why they are normally not made public. The minister also expressed his willingness to discuss the matter further with the hon. member.

As far as National Defence is concerned, everything is being done to improve the search and rescue capability of the rescue co-ordination centres, including the one on the west coast. I regret I do not have time to read the very long list of success stories carried out under the search and rescue program.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.32 p.m.