

of national defence, the minister of transport and the minister responsible for marine transport. That review was to have been completed in the spring of 1980 and I was advised by those ministers that I would receive copies of the review within weeks. Now, nine months later, I still do not have notice of the findings of that review.

The basic problem is that the principal administrators of search and rescue, the decision-makers and politicians here in Ottawa, are apathetic about this crisis and about the loss of human life, which usually takes place in cold water.

This is a very serious problem for the people of British Columbia, Mr. Speaker, especially those who make their livelihood on the Pacific coast waters or who use those waters regularly for recreational and other purposes. This includes fishermen, pleasure boat operators, the B.C. ferries, coastal cruisers, those engaged in shipping, towing and flying, to a large degree.

I want to make it clear this afternoon that it is not my purpose to accuse or criticize individual persons who operate the Rescue Co-ordination Centre in Victoria or those who man the search and rescue services generally. These people are doing an excellent job in many respects and have saved many human lives. We commend them for that. The problem is that they are governed by bureaucratic directives and orders from above. The system is at fault. The attitudes among senior decision-makers within that system is what I call the "admiralty approach" to search and rescue, rather than the blood and guts approach which is required in order to get to the site of a tragic accident in time to save the lives of people in the water.

I have here, Mr. Speaker, a report which summarizes the findings and recommendations of the jury at the inquest on the *Lee Wang Zin* sinking in December of 1979 when the lives of 30 Taiwanese crew members were lost in an overturned vessel. The Department of Transport did not attend the scene until 38 hours after the first SOS signal was received.

I should like hon. members to imagine themselves for a moment in the position of a young Taiwanese sailor just having left the port of Prince Rupert after loading ore, on his way home to Taiwan to greet his wife and children. He is awakened at five o'clock in the morning, notices that the ship is heaving and rolling heavily, not in its usual fashion, is suddenly thrown into a catastrophic overturn, his bedding thrown around the cabin. He worries and wonders whether a distress signal has been sent. He calls for his friends, searches around the lower reaches of the vessel for them, feels the heaving motion of the ship from the underside of the berth where he is trying to hang on for dear life. He grows fearful and cold, his teeth chatter, he grows numb while he wonders, waits and hopes. Nothing happens. He waits for an hour, maybe half an hour, maybe three hours, perhaps 24 hours. He grows more and more numb, sleepy and weak. He gradually subsides, never to see the light of day again.

That was the tragedy that the crew of this vessel faced, that the rest of us can pretend to ignore. They were trapped within the overturned hulk of a seagoing freighter on December 25, 1979.

Search and Rescue Services

Meanwhile, at the Rescue Co-ordination Centre in Victoria, the distress signal had been heard and reported. It was a clearly coded distress signal, "SOS-EEC". The men at the co-ordination centre, however, took almost an hour to identify the ship. This is not necessarily their fault because they did not have an up-to-date copy of the international directory of ships' call signs and so could not identify the vessel. The identification is important because that is the only way the ship's name could be determined and thus its point of departure and the course it was taking.

At the coroner's inquest which took place in January and February of 1980, evidence was presented that a coastguard helicopter located in Prince Rupert, only 60 kilometres from the scene of the accident, did not become airborne until three hours after the first SOS signal was received. It was not until Boxing Day, 32 hours after the mayday signal, that the first coastguard vessel arrived on the scene. It had been undergoing a refit and had to be put back together before they could proceed to sea.

No attempt was made by the Rescue Co-ordination Centre to seek the help of Rescue 15, a group of 40 volunteer boaters operating out of Prince Rupert. If they had been asked, they would have been willing to respond to the first mayday signal. Indeed, they did obey a coastguard directive in the book of rules which prohibits self-dispatching. They stayed home. What kind of directive is it that prevents people from going to the assistance of their fellowmen?

A tugboat, the *Cindy Mozel* could have responded within an hour of the mayday call, not 32 hours, but it was not called. In fact, no general mayday call was relayed on all frequencies after the signal had been translated.

At Canadian Forces Base, Comox, the Labrador helicopters are normally on two-hour standby. That is how long it takes to get them in the air during off hours. It is a policy dictated by Ottawa and applied across Canada. On that day, however, it would have taken three and one-half or four hours to get the aircraft up there and then they would have had to refuel at Prince Rupert. The helicopters were not ready. They are reported to have been under repair at the time.

Eventually the Rescue Co-ordination Centre called for a United States helicopter based in Sitka, Alaska, because the United States had the equipment and the trained search and rescue personnel available.

Why do I call for an independent inquiry, Mr. Speaker? It is in part because other startling testimony was presented to the inquest which is documented in the coroner's report. The duty watch officer was not called to testify. This testimony was given by the commanding officer. The coastguard maintained that the crew died instantly and that therefore any rescue attempt would have been futile. What kind of an attitude is that, Mr. Speaker, to decide the time of death before the facts are known? There was a long distance assumption that there would be no ship in the area and therefore the relay of the mayday message was deemed to be unnecessary. This was testimony at the coroner's inquest. The Rescue Co-ordination Centre decided to delay help on the assumption that conditions