

As to whether we have had any discussions with my provincial counterparts, Mr. Speaker, not in recent months have I had any contact whatsoever with any of my colleagues in the Government of Ontario.

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POINT OF ORDER

NEW HOUSE OF COMMONS SEATING PLAN

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Recently there have been rumours that there has been some confusion within the ranks of the Liberal Party. I have in front of me the new seating plan for the House of Commons. It indicates by the line between the Liberal and the Conservative Party Members that the Members for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East (Mr. Allmand), Davenport (Mr. Caccia), Bourassa (Mr. Rossi), and Saint-Léonard—Anjou (Mr. Gagliano), have joined the Conservative Party. I wonder if there has been any communication to the Speaker that would justify this new seating plan.

Mr. Speaker: I want to assure the Hon. Member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy), and other Hon. Members, that I see no distinction at all.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

• (1510)

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, the New Democrats have their own copies of everything. I have a copy of the seating plan of this House, which indicates very clearly that the Members that they just referred to, Mr. Allmand, Mr. Rossi, and all these other people, are indeed members of this caucus and are seated in their appropriate places.

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to confirm what we have heard from our colleague from the Official Opposition. The seating plan on the Conservative side does have the distinction between the Conservatives and the Liberals. What bothers us on this side of the House is that there is a line between the NDP and the Liberals. That probably does not belong.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

CANARCTIC NAVIGATION COMPANY LTD.

TABLING OF 1987 ANNUAL REPORT

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 67(2), I have the honour

Statements by Ministers

of tabling, in both official languages, the 1987 Annual Report of Canarctic Shipping Company Limited.

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PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 106(8), I have the honour of tabling, in both official languages, the Government's response to seven petitions numbered as follows: 332-5297 to 332-5299 inclusive, 332-5355, 332-5356, 332-5363 and 332-5419.

[Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.]

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EXTERNAL AID

DAMAGE CAUSED BY HURRICANE GILBERT IN THE CARIBBEANS—CANADA'S RESPONSE

Hon. Monique Landry (Minister for External Relations): Mr. Speaker, speaking on behalf of the Government of Canada and on my own behalf and also on behalf of the Canadian people, I would like to express our heartfelt sympathy with the suffering caused by Hurricane Gilbert in the Caribbean, and especially in Jamaica.

I want to apologize to my colleagues and opposition critics for not having distributed the text of my statement earlier, but until the very last minute I expected to receive additional information for my statement and that is what caused the delay.

Hon. Members and Canadians have been able to ascertain from initial reports the devastation caused by this hurricane in Jamaica as well as in several other countries and territories in the Caribbean. The Government, through the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), and the people of Canada have already indicated they are prepared to play an active and effective role in helping to meet the basic needs of the people of Jamaica, and responding to the future priorities of the Government of that country for recovery and reconstruction.

[English]

However, Mr. Speaker, there is a serious lack of detailed information about the status of Canadians in Jamaica; the extent and nature of damage and Jamaica's needs; and about the friends and relatives of Canadians living on the island. In these circumstances we have decided on a phased approach to enable the people and Government of Canada to make an appropriate, prompt, and effective response to this tragedy.