

Routine Proceedings

Their families have been notified of the loss of their loved ones. I am sure that all members of the House will join me in extending our very heartfelt sympathies to the families of these personnel.

The rescue effort is continuing. I am informed that at two o'clock this afternoon the first four of the injured survivors were evacuated to the Canadian Forces Station Alert.

Our skilled search and rescue technicians are on the scene and a medical evacuation of the remainder of the survivors is currently under way. It will take time because of the very demanding circumstances, but progress is being made.

The casualties are being evacuated by helicopter from the crash site to CFS Alert. From there, after further assessment and treatment, they will be evacuated through the Thule Air Force Base to the most appropriate locations for required medical care.

I would like to acknowledge the generous assistance that has been provided by the United States Air Force to this rescue operation.

Finally, on behalf of all Canadians and the families involved, I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude for the outstanding efforts that have been made by all the men and women involved in the search and rescue effort.

Obviously at this point it is premature to speculate on the cause of the crash. There is an investigation which is under way and I will be sure to keep the House informed, perhaps on Monday, of further details on this. Over the weekend we will be making information available through the media about any further circumstances and the location of the injured.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister taking the time out of her busy schedule today to come back to the House with this statement. I know that this problem must be preoccupying for her and I appreciate her taking the time to inform the House, and all Canadians, of the situation that has arisen in this tragedy on Ellesmere Island.

Like the minister, we would share the sense of loss that has occurred here for the five who have died in the crash. We extend our sympathies to the families and friends of those persons. It must be very difficult for

them when these persons have been killed in the line of duty. We appreciate their service to our country and particularly in the very difficult circumstances they found themselves in in northern Canada at this time of year.

I want to commend the rescue efforts that the minister has indicated are being undertaken. I am pleased to hear that some of the persons on the site have been returned to safety. We hope, as does the minister, that the rescue efforts will continue successfully and that all the persons who are currently on Ellesmere Island can be removed safely to Alert and other places and receive the required medical treatment.

Our prayers go out to the survivors of the crash, that they may be returned safely to their families and friends in due course. We will certainly bear them in mind over the course of the weekend. We look forward to progress reports being forthcoming in the course of time and to hear that everyone has been safely removed and that everything will work out for the best for them.

Again I wish to express the sympathy of the opposition for the loss of these people who have died in the line of duty. On behalf of all Canadians, I wish to express our gratitude for their service to their country and our sense of bereavement at their passing to their families and their friends.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, all members of the House will join I am sure in offering our condolences to the families of those who died in this very tragic accident. They died in the service of their country and we honour them for the service they have given and say to those who have suffered this loss that, as my predecessor said, they will be in our prayers this weekend.

We also join in the minister's words of praise for those who have worked on the rescue effort. Obviously it was an outstanding effort and we want to acknowledge that today.

The minister has been very helpful and forthcoming in saying to the House that there is an investigation going on into the causes and that the results will be made available to the House.

I would just like to say that all members of the House will be aware that this is not the first accident with a Hercules aircraft. It is not to suggest any prejudgment of the cause of this accident to say that I hope this House