

*Adjournment Debate*

tic. So there are three in Quebec and three in Dartmouth, when they should be in St. John's, Newfoundland.

We have two more large icebreakers under construction. One will be commissioned on July 1 of this year. I think they were built in Vancouver. That icebreaker will go to Quebec. We have a second one under construction which will be in service in 1979, and that vessel is to go to the Halifax-Dartmouth area. Why is it that everything in the Department of Transport is so patently political? There are four heavy icebreakers to be stationed in Dartmouth, one medium icebreaker in St. John's, four in Quebec. What is up, Mr. Speaker? These icebreakers should be stationed in St. John's where they are close to the scene of the action, where they are needed off the coast of Newfoundland.

I want to ask the minister to do something about that and to improve safety and the icebreaking capability of his forces off the coast of Newfoundland by stationing at least two more heavy icebreakers in St. John's or some other suitable port in Newfoundland. If Gander were a port—it would get these icebreakers, but Gander is not a port—so perhaps St. John's can have some hope. I would like the minister's apology. He is not here tonight—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member has run over his time.

**Mr. W. Kenneth Robinson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, at the outset I would like to say to the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) that I think the matter he has raised is in fact a serious matter, as he has pointed out. He has also made some very serious representations, particularly with regard to safety and the whole question of the use of icebreakers and where they should be located. I hope the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) will take notice of this because the representation appears to be well founded.

● (2227)

It is unfortunate that the hon. member did not receive a copy of the news release of February 28, which I assume is the one he is referring to. I am sure it was an oversight and was not done deliberately.

The *Cape Royal*, a 132-foot side trawler of 350 tons gross tonnage, sailed from Burgeo on what should have been a 15-hour voyage to Marystown, Newfoundland, where she was to undergo refit. In preparation for drydocking, all her fishing gear had been removed and when she sailed the vessel was

without ballast or ice. Eight persons were on board, all of whom are presumed lost.

In brief, the sequence of events appears to have been as follows. First, at 1820 hours local time on August 4, 1977, the *Cape Royal* left Burgeo. Second, at 1920 hours that same day, the *Cape Royal* called the fishing vessel *Gulf Gerd* but when the latter replied she received no answer. This was the last time any message was received from the *Cape Royal*. Third, that the vessel was overdue was not realized until 1620 hours on August 12, when a routine message from Burgeo to Marystown concerning her refit drew attention to the fact that the *Cape Royal* had not arrived. A check with St. Pierre established that she had not taken shelter in that area. Fourth, at 1905 hours on August 12, traffic control centre in St. John's was advised that the *Cape Royal* was overdue. Search and rescue operations were put in hand immediately.

Nothing has been seen or heard of the missing men to date. The vessel's overturned lifeboat was located on August 17, the indication being that it had not been launched, and two life rings were subsequently found ashore in the St. Bride's area of the Avalon Peninsula. The exact cause of the casualty could not be determined, but the absence of any distress signals and the apparent failure to make use of the lifesaving equipment would seem to indicate that disaster struck suddenly. No further wreckage has been located despite extensive search, and it now seems unlikely that anything further will be found. In consequence, the coast guard commissioner recommended to the minister that a formal investigation be ordered.

As you may be aware, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport announced February 28, 1978 that there would be a public inquiry into the disappearance of the trawler *Cape Royal* to begin in St. John's, Newfoundland. As was pointed out by the hon. member, on April 4, 1978 Judge Rupert W. Bartlett of the district court of Trinity-Conception has been appointed commissioner and Eric C. Facey, of Gander, will be commission counsel.

I realize that a lot of time has passed since this most unfortunate accident, but at least now something is going to be done by way of an inquiry which I hope will clarify matters for the hon. member.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at two o'clock.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10:28 p.m.