

FISHERIES—SINKING OF TRAWLER "CAPE ROYAL"—REQUEST  
FOR PUBLIC INQUIRY

**Mr. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West):** Mr. Speaker, on August 9, 1977 the side trawler, the 132 foot side trawler, *Cape Royal* left Burgeo on the south coast of Newfoundland to go to Marystown in Placentia Bay, to the shipyard there for some work to be done on the vessel. She was not going out fishing. She was just travelling to Marystown for repair work. So she did not have a full crew. She had a captain and seven men on board. Now, that voyage, Mr. Speaker, normally takes something like 13 hours. She left around 6 p.m. on August 9. She should have been at Marystown by 10.30 a.m. the next day. For some unknown reason, Mr. Speaker—well, the reason is known. Fishing vessels do not usually report when they are going to arrive or where they arrive when they go out fishing. Apparently this tradition was kept up, although the vessel was only going to Marystown for repairs. Nobody apparently expected to hear from her when she got to Marystown. Nobody checked, Mr. Speaker, for 2½ days to see whether that vessel had reached Marystown or not.

When somebody did happen to call Marystown 2½ days later on Friday, August 12, they discovered that the vessel had never reached Marystown and she was lost. After an extensive search, all that was ever found, Mr. Speaker, was one lifeboat. It was found on August 17, and nothing else has ever been found. Now, of course, this is a case that called out for a public inquiry. Because radio station CKCM in Marystown and the people on the south coast were not getting any action from their member, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Jamieson), and could not get any information from the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang), they contacted me.

On October 26 I put a motion under Standing Order 43 before the House, asking the House to direct the Minister of Transport to proceed immediately to appoint a public commission of inquiry into the loss of this side trawler and her crew, and into the adequacy of safety procedures and regulations governing transport by sea on the south coast of Newfoundland, with such inquiry to commence immediately and to report its recommendations as soon as humanly possible. The motion was not passed because an hon. member on the government side would not give it unanimous consent and said no.

On the same day I asked the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment (Mr. LeBlanc), in the absence of the Minister of Transport, whether an inquiry would be ordered. Well, eventually in December, Mr. Speaker, which was four months after the vessel sank, the Minister of Transport told me when I inquired of him that he was going to have a public inquiry; and I was able to pass that information on to the people of Newfoundland four months after this vessel was lost with all hands. However, from December there was still no one appointed in January; no one was appointed to the inquiry in February. But now, finally on March 1, a commissioner has been appointed to hold this inquiry, Judge Rupert Bartlett of the District Court in Newfoundland. So some seven months after the vessel was lost the commissioner is finally appointed,

*Adjournment Debate*

and he is going to start his work in the inquiry on April 4, 1978, eight months after this vessel and all her crew were lost.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is an inexcusable delay, in my opinion an unnecessary delay. There is no reason for this. But another thing I have to point out is that I was the man who initiated the questions, the Standing Order 43's, and the private discussions with the Minister of Transport. The minister issued a release on March 1 but did not even send me a copy. I was not given the courtesy by the minister of a copy of that release or the information that the commissioner was appointed. It is a scurvy kind of behaviour.

● (2222)

The minister is morose. He is as morose as a moulting mule. He is some kind of a sorehead that he would not give a member of the House of Commons the courtesy of sending him a release when an appointment was made like that. I had spoken to him three or four times in that connection, but at last, finally, this inquiry is underway. Hopefully it will recommend better safety procedures on the south coast of Newfoundland and recommend that fishing vessels and all vessels should report when they leave the harbour and when they arrive at their destination, and should report every day so that this kind of an incident where a vessel is missing for two and a half days and nobody knows that it is missing will not happen. In that case it was not known until a phone call was made at Marystown by a relative of one of the crew who discovered that the vessel was not even there. Of course, it would even be that much better if the inquiry can find out why the vessel was lost.

While I have this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the fund raising committee for the *Cape Royal* disaster fund—their spokesman is Mr. George Coley who, I believe is from Burgeo-Ramea on the south coast—has collected \$134,000 for the lost eight crew members on that vessel. Of course, their families also get workmen's compensation and compensation of that nature. Donations came from all over Newfoundland and from parts of Nova Scotia. In the old Newfoundland tradition a fund is being started, and this \$134,000 will be used to help the six widows and 17 dependent children. It is a very, very sad affair and I cannot understand why we had to wait for eight months for the inquiry to even commence. There is an inquiry into the *William Carson* which I do not think has reported as yet, but in that case there was not even loss of life. Here eight lives were tragically lost.

In connection with safety around the coast of Newfoundland, the question arises as to what the minister is doing with icebreaking services for Newfoundland. The Canadian government has six heavy icebreakers. Three of them are stationed in Quebec City and three are stationed in Dartmouth; and here is Newfoundland, in the middle of the Arctic ice, in the middle of the ice that comes through the straits of Belle Isle, through Labrador down our north east coast, and we have one medium icebreaker in St. John's, the *Sir Humphrey Gilbert*, and one icebreaking cable vessel, *John Cabot*, which is supposed to watch the patrolling of cables off Newfoundland in the Atlan-