

**STORMS****ICE DAMAGE IN COUNTY OF WENTWORTH—REQUEST FOR COMPENSATION**

**Mr. Colin D. Gibson (Hamilton-Wentworth):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. As the result of severe property damages caused by a very severe ice storm in Saltfleet and Ancaster municipalities in the county of Wentworth, would the Minister of the Environment consider recommending payment of emergency damages to alleviate the problem created?

**Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure that if this disaster is beyond the competence of the government of Ontario, we in Ottawa will be hearing from Queens Park about it.

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**ENERGY****COAL—EFFECT OF POSSIBLE MINING IN ONTARIO ON AID TO NOVA SCOTIA MINES**

**Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Can the minister say whether any recent plans have come to his attention regarding possible mining of anthracite coal in the province of Ontario? If so, would this have any bearing on his current policy of possibly extending aid to the Nova Scotia coal mines?

**Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, the mining of anthracite in Ontario has not come to my attention but I would be glad to make inquiries on the point.

**Mr. Speaker:** Orders of the day.

**Mr. Lundrigan:** A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Gander-Twillingate is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Lundrigan:** This matter has been raised several times during the last year and concerns the fact that since this parliament commenced we have had a 40-minute question period. In view of the question raised by the hon. member for Egmont, it is clear that there is absolutely no way for a member of parliament to hold a minister accountable for his department. We have raised this question in the House and asked the various House leaders to get together with a view to extending the question period.

Today, for example, or rather late yesterday, there was an incident off the east coast of Canada in which a Canadian vessel was intimidated by a foreign vessel. We are unable to ask questions of the Minister of the Environment about this incident, even though it could be tantamount to the declaration of a particular type of naval war against the people of Canada. There are matters of an urgent nature respecting various regions of Canada about which my colleagues to my left along the backbenches have been unable to ask questions. If we are to continue to have a reasonable opportunity of getting through to ministers with urgent questions, I suggest serious considera-

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

tion must be given to extending the question period and I think that consideration should be given immediately.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member has raised this question before. I do not want to be unfair to him or to any other member, but speaking very objectively and sincerely I have the impression that sometimes a question period that lasted even one or two hours would not be sufficient for all questions to be asked. This is particularly the case if half the question period is taken up with points of order and questions of privilege.

• (1510)

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Speaker:** I certainly do not want to disagree with the hon. member. Obviously, he has a point. It is obvious that from day to day members who are seeking to ask questions do not have the opportunity. There is a responsibility on the part of the Chair to try to recognize as many members as possible.

**Mr. Lewis:** I rise on a question of privilege.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Perhaps I might be allowed to finish. The hon. member has suggested that the whole problem be considered by the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization. I agree with this. I hope that when the committee meets it will give very serious consideration to this kind of difficulty.

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I believe it affects all members of parliament. I am anxious to draw this point to Your Honour's attention while the Prime Minister is still in the chamber. In reply to questions asked of the Prime Minister with regard to the late filing by the Auditor General of his report, he said—I do not claim to be quoting him verbatim but this is certainly not an inaccurate representation of what he said—that if parliament is willing to let him break the law or something to the effect that if Members of parliament are willing to condone a breach of the law or the Auditor General breaking the law, it is okay with him.

I make several points, Mr. Speaker. I think the behaviour of the Prime Minister in such cases is really remarkable, if not worse than that, if not reprehensible. First, as one member of this parliament I do not intend to allow the Prime Minister to accuse me, my colleagues or, indeed, any member of this parliament of condoning lawbreaking by any servant.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Lewis:** Second, if the Prime Minister is right, then as leader of the government, and therefore as leader of this parliament, he should have the courage to produce a resolution to deal with the Auditor General in the way in which the act provides.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!