

I think it will be of interest to many of you. It details in very specific terms the Canadian aid which it is proposed to extend to Italy, and the requests which have been received for additional aid. With the leave of the chamber perhaps this, too, can be incorporated in the record of this evening's proceedings.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is leave granted, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Text of document follows:)

What is the Canadian contribution?

—An immediate grant of \$300,000 for emergency relief, through the Canadian Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies. This includes the \$100,000 announced in the House on Monday.

—A contribution of \$1.5 million to assist in rehabilitation and reconstruction. This contribution will be coordinated with private sector efforts including those of the Italian Canadian Community.

Has the emergency grant been spent?

—The Canadian Red Cross was officially notified, November 27, that the government would provide it a total grant of \$300,000. This notification constitutes sufficient authority for the Red Cross to spend the money immediately.

Why have no special DND flights been sent?

—I requested from the Italian Ambassador a list of priority items required in Italy (trailors, temporary accomodation, tents, water purifiers, blankets).

—My concern was that these items reach the stricken areas as fast as possible.

—It was clear that the League of Red Cross Societies could deliver these items more quickly, with access to stores in Europe itself.

—DND flights have not been ruled out, especially in the event our resources at Lahr were requested by the Italian authorities, with whom I am in constant contact.

When will the \$1.5 million be spent?

—It is earmarked for reconstruction and rehabilitation; priority needs in this respect will only be possible to identify after the initial period of emergency relief is over.

—In the private sector and among the Italian-Canadian community, efforts to organize fund raising are still under way.

—While no precise date can be given at this time, our hope is that this money could be spent at the earliest realistic date, probably early in the new calendar year, definitely before end of the current fiscal year.

How will the \$1.5 million be spent?

—As stated before, we intend to join our efforts with those of concerned Canadians who are actively and commendably raising funds from the private sector.

—Efforts in the private sector are still under way, including efforts to structure the collection of funds.

Therefore,

—Exact mechanisms have not yet been defined, to discuss the most appropriate ones with those organizations most active in the private sector, among which the National Congress of Italian-Canadians (NCIC) plays a most prominent role. In a general way, we would plan to make this money available in the form of a grant to a national reconstruction fund.

Is the NCIC the only organisation the government will consult?

—As a nationally based body, the Congress has played a commendable leading role in the collection of funds. We would want to consult with it, but would also wish to include other organizations or individuals who have devoted themselves to this effort.

Why was the announcement made by the Minister of State for Multiculturalism and not the SSEA?

—Because of the importance of the matter, we wanted to announce the measures as soon as they were decided, on November 26.

—The SSEA was out of town on that day.

—Mr. Fleming was the person indicated to make the announcement in the SSEA's absence both because his responsibilities put him in contact with the Italian-Canadian organizations collecting funds and because he payed an official visit to the stricken area last September.

Airlift to Italy:

Why has to government chosen to make contributions in kind, so late after this disaster?

—Specific needs were difficult to identify earlier. The League of Red Cross Societies was the most adequate mechanism to coordinate the international relief effort;

—Last Friday, the Italian government provided us in Rome with a specific list of items of which there remained a shortfall;

—From available stocks at C.F.B. Lahr, Germany, we were able to identify items that could make up part of this shortfall (1,000 blankets, warm clothing, food-stuffs);

—We provided these goods after clearing with the Italian Ambassador, Friday evening, that they were indeed required. The requirement was confirmed once again yesterday, Sunday, both by the Italian government and the Italian Red Cross.

What guarantees did the government seek to ensure that these goods would be put to effective use?

—While there is little we can do to help the relief operations on site, we can and we chose to ensure that they are conducted with all the supplies required for their success;