

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

AIR INDIA

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, do you remember where you were on the morning of June 23, 1985? That was almost eight years ago now.

Dr. Bal K. Gupta remembers. Dr. H. S. Radhakrishna remembers. The Aurora family remembers. The Jain family remembers. The Khan family, the Patel family, the Sharma family, the Singh family, the Uppal family, the Castonguay family and many others remember.

They remember, Mr. Speaker, and you may remember as well because that was the morning that we and they received the shocking and the horrifying news that many members of their families had perished on Air India flight 182. That was a flight bound from Toronto via Montreal to London and New Delhi. It plunged into the ocean off the coast of Ireland killing some 329 innocent men, women and children. Two hundred and seventy-nine of those people were Canadian citizens and they came from every corner of this country and every province from Newfoundland to British Columbia.

The very same day a bomb went off in connection with another Air India flight originating in Canada. That bomb went off at Tokyo's Narita International Airport and killed two Japanese citizens and injured four others.

Long ago an investigation was conducted and completed in Ireland in connection with the Air India flight 182. Long ago an investigation was conducted and completed in India but an investigation of this tragedy has been under way now in Canada for almost eight years. It is still going on and there have never been charges laid or convictions registered in connection with this.

There have been allegations that there were warnings made in connection with this flight that were ignored. There have been allegations that evidence has been destroyed. Last year the RCMP raised wreckage from the floor of the ocean off Ireland but on June 1 of this

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year the Solicitor General told the House that the investigation continues to be active and ongoing, eight years later.

Is it any wonder that the families and friends of those 279 Canadians who perished are frustrated, angry and bitter?

Surely it is time that either charges are laid or if that is not possible we institute a judicial inquiry immediately.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, a terrible tragedy took place on June 23, eight years ago, when Air India flight 182 crashed in the Irish sea, killing 329 passengers.

• (1735)

On the premise that the explosion was caused by a bomb placed in the aircraft by terrorists, Canada embarked on the most extensive and costliest criminal investigation in its history.

Three times, under difficult conditions, the RCMP initiated operations at sea in an attempt to recover evidence. This particular incident and other acts of terrorism in Canada and abroad have caused the government to undertake a thorough review of our national security and anti-terrorist system, including anti-terrorist measures in the civil aviation sector.

As hon. members are probably aware, when he appeared before the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General on April 29, 1993, the Commissioner of the RCMP gave the assurance that the investigation was ongoing. The government feels it is extremely important the the perpetrators of this crime be brought to justice. The government makes no apology for spending whatever money is necessary to find the perpetrators of this heinous crime.

The government sees no purpose in holding a public inquiry, however, because this exercise, in dealing with the circumstances of the tragedy, might prejudice the progress of the current police investigation and jeopardize court cases.

The government has certainly not forgotten the innocent families that have been through so much and wants to give them the assurance that it is doing everything to ensure that justice is done.