

Search and Rescue Services

were too rough. If you do not know where the vessel is or you only have a rough idea, how can you assume that conditions are too rough? The circumstances of the *Lee Wang Zin* are tragic indeed. I do not want to finger any particular individuals in these departments; the matter is in the past. But the threat of error rests in a whole series of problems, including inadequate equipment, delays in getting started, errors of judgment, procedural mistakes, refusals of offers of assistance from other vessels in the area, improper telephone numbers and communication problems.

● (1610)

These difficulties are not restricted to the *Lee Wang Zin* tragedy. They are common to many accidents in recent years on the west coast, most of which go unnoticed here in Ottawa because they involve fewer lives. But in any event, the problems are similar. They boil down to a question of distance and time. Can we get to the scene fast enough and do we have the required rescue equipment in order to get into the water to keep those people alive before it is too late?

This blood and guts attitude, characteristic of the British lifeboat system, of the volunteer system and of the Canadian Armed Forces personnel when they jump out of a helicopter into the water, and this eagerness of people to be involved in saving another person's life is what is important in mounting an effective search and rescue service. It has been characterized by one well-known and not too popular spokesman on the west coast that Canada's search and rescue operations are managed as follows: "They have one guy doing a job and ten guys slinging paper".

I want to tell you now about a 17-year-old girl named Sandra Klein. A year or two ago Sandra and her father were patrolling in the Gulf Islands. They were called to a scene of a burning sailboat. They were closer than any other vessel. She travelled single handedly in a 17-foot Boston whaler at speeds of 25 to 30 knots across 17 miles in 27 minutes. She arrived at the scene of the burning sailboat. There was no one on board. She spotted a floating form in the water. At the same time she noted adjacent to her on the scene there was a navy vessel, the *YMR-4*. This navy vessel did not have a small enough boat to launch into the water. The crew were clustered in the bow looking at the floating casualty. Sandra Klein jumped into the icy water. She supported the man and applied mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and applied it continuously as they were both lifted from the water by the navy vessel. That is an act of valour. Subsequently Sandra's act of valour was acknowledged by the Governor General by the granting of an award to this 17-year-old girl for her efforts in saving a man's life while the navy looked on.

I think this speaks of the change of attitude which is required in the delivery of search and rescue, particularly on our west coast.

Just this morning Lieutenant-General K. E. Lewis, Commander Air Command responsible for search and rescue at a conference in Ottawa in response to a question said, "Search and rescue is a highly visible and high profile operation."

Therefore, decisions as to the involvement of Armed Forces Reserve units, or for that matter auxiliary assistance, were a matter of political consideration.

In his written presentation to the conference Lieutenant-General Lewis commended west coast search and rescue for assisting in the saving of 519 passengers' lives on the *Prinzen-dam* which burned in the Gulf of Alaska in Canadian waters last fall. His written presentation in part states:

It is of interest to note that 442 squadron was notified at 0500 on a Saturday morning and within 3 hours was able to launch two Buffaloes, two Labrador helicopters and a full medical team.

I submit that two hours is not enough. It is too much time. When people are in cold water, particularly in winter weather, they are susceptible to hypothermia which is fatal within a half an hour, and a two-hour standby is far too long.

The government spent almost \$3 million last year on west coast search and rescue to handle 4,200 rescue calls. That is approximately 12 calls each day year round, including winter time. The budget allows some \$650 per incident in terms of funding for the main search and rescue exercise. The volunteers who are trying to organize along the lines of the British lifeboat brigade who use their own vessels and equipment are reimbursed \$30 per incident.

These people recently approached the government requesting an increase to \$70 per incident. That is one-tenth of what the gold-plated system consumes. They wanted only \$70 per incident to meet the fuel expenses, to buy a radio, to provide rescue equipment on their private craft, but it was refused. These people are ready and willing to assist in search and rescue, but the government appears to provide very little assistance. Indeed, it treats these individuals as amateurs in some respects. Statements have been made. One individual was told when he was asked to stand down and not attend the scene of an incident that the taxpayer would rather have a government vessel do the work. That is typical of our society these days, isn't it, Mr. Speaker? Where is the spirit of voluntarism going?

Most individuals who are willing to participate in these rescue efforts are experienced on the water, whether they are fishermen, salvagers, pleasure boat operators, ferry captains, tow boat operators or others. These people can provide a valuable service if encouraged. The reluctance of national defence, coastguard and rescue co-ordination centres to utilize the services of Rescue 15, a group of 40 volunteers in Prince Rupert on Christmas Day a year ago should be proof that something is wrong within the system. As I have already said, the coastguard has issued a directive ordering volunteers not to respond to calls unless they are dispatched. It might cost the government another \$30.

I had a most enjoyable week in Wales visiting British lifeboat stations, touring the watch stations, and the radio monitoring systems. Their rescue boats are maintained just as fire engines are maintained by a volunteer fire department. They polish brass, but they are there to provide beach watch and marine safety training to their communities. These stations are spaced ten to 20 miles apart along the coast. They