

the devastation on City Island, which is a recreational park in Harrisburg that is just literally covered with big boulders of ice and destroying all the public buildings there that I would say are relatively brand new. They in the last 10 years constructed a AA baseball stadium there that is severely damaged from ice.

That has really made this disaster a lot different because Harrisburg was hit back in 1972 with very severe flooding as a result of Hurricane Agnes. In fact, the mayor and others have been telling us that while the flood levels were not as high as Hurricane Agnes, although in some areas they were almost as high, the damage, they believe, actually will be more because of the ice. Literally, Senator SPECTER and I were walking around an area that was 5 feet underwater just 24 hours before, and sitting there all over the place were boulders of ice almost my size and probably bigger, with trees frozen to them. It was really a rather gruesome picture. You could actually see the water level because on the houses and the fences and on the trees you could see where the ice had frozen around the tree, around the houses, sort of jutting out from the houses. So you could pretty well tell everywhere where the water levels had risen to.

We were through that area and saw the damage that the ice had caused to streets and to houses, the buckling effect of having water there and then freezing and then unfreezing. It looks almost like an earthquake on some of the roads; they are just sort of warped, with big sinkholes and things like that as a result of this freezing and thawing and freezing again and the amount of water pressure.

In fact, Senator SPECTER and I met with Mayor Reed of Harrisburg, whom I have to commend; he has done a tremendous job in rallying the troops in Harrisburg, one of our hardest hit cities, and is doing an outstanding job personally. He is someone whom I have known for quite some time and know he puts every ounce of his person in his job. I am sure he has not slept for days. He met us in boots and blue jeans and looked like he had not been able to get into his house, probably even to eat a meal, in a few days. He has really just been on the go.

They had a horrible fire in this area I was talking about that was 5 feet under water. They had, unfortunately, a fire break out last night that destroyed four historic town homes. And luckily no one was injured. The area was evacuated obviously and no one was injured as a resident. But several of the firefighters, they had to cut their way through the ice and wade through water, waist high at that time, and fight the fire without obviously any fire hoses. They had to string them literally blocks to get fire hoses there.

My understanding is that a dozen firefighters were carried from the scene with hypothermia—a horrible situation. I know Mayor Reed was there the

entire time working on it. He showed us the Walnut Street bridge, which is the oldest—I am not going to get this right—it is the oldest of some type of bridge having to do with metal construction. That bridge was expected to collapse during the 1972 flood when actually the river went up over the platform of the bridge.

In this case it was several feet below it. But a section of the bridge—you may have seen on television—was knocked away. The reason was not because of the water flow. Again, it was the ice jams. An ice jam had a large amount of ice collected at this one abutment, and eventually with all the pressure it was knocked over, was knocked into the river. They expect another one of those pillars to fall relatively soon.

So there has been a severe amount of damage. Senator SPECTER and I are very concerned about the Federal response to the damage across Pennsylvania. We believe that in some instances the response was delayed. I know the President would like to see all the people and communities that have been severely hurt by this storm to get the kind of assistance that they need to begin to clean up and rebuild their lives.

I am hopeful that we can move forward. As Senator SPECTER said, initially only six counties were listed as qualifying for this assistance. One of the counties that did not qualify originally, and did not qualify until this afternoon, was a county where there were 6 people known dead, 75 people missing from an area that was a large housing development that was literally just swept away. Water rose rapidly. People were given no warning. The consequences were terrible. Yet that county was not listed originally on the disaster list, which amazed many of us and frankly was very discouraging.

I had occasion to talk to people up in Williamsport, Lycoming County. And they were very discouraged. Somehow they were suffering to this degree, and in fact accounted, from my understanding, for over half the deaths related to this storm in the Northeast, and yet were not listed as a county eligible for disaster assistance. That caused some legitimate uneasiness to where actually their needs and concerns were being paid attention to. I am happy to report they were listed in the second round.

There are other counties that we need to look at that I believe have legitimate needs to be met. Hopefully we can do that, we can do that expeditiously. I want to join Senator SPECTER in congratulating Secretary Peña and Director Witt for being up in Pennsylvania today to survey the damage, to see the extent of what seemed to be just a flood.

I remind you the compounding effect of the ice is something I do not think anyone recognized. I was in Lancaster County, which unfortunately has yet to be declared a disaster county.

I was in Marietta which was flooded, at least the parts nearest the river were flooded. Their big concern right now is the freezing that is going on. They were flooded. They have something like a dike. It is actually a railroad track that runs between the river and the town that is very high up and serves like a dike. But they got flooded through their storm sewers, and the water reaching its level filled up both sides of the dike. Now they are concerned with the storm sewers. Because of the very cold temperatures, they are now frozen. If they get any more rain, which is anticipated tomorrow, or any other precipitation, they will have the same problem all over again.

Many counties and many cities, they have that same problem with either frozen surface areas that prevent water from draining or the infrastructure underneath the ground itself containing ice and frozen debris is going to cause a real problem with drainage.

So we are not out of the woods yet. There is unfortunately still a lot of snow on the ground. The possibility exists, with the warm weather today, we could even see some more problems. So I want to congratulate Governor Ridge and Lt. Gov. Mark Schweiker for their tremendous role in responding to this emergency. They have been all over the State, have been very aggressive in trying to seek aid, and have also been very aggressive in trying to help municipalities trying to deal with the problems that have beset them.

I think we have seen a very good effort on the part of locally elected officials, and the Governor and Lieutenant Governor. I think—at least I hope that we can be proud of the Federal role that is being played in Pennsylvania. I think we are coming along a little slowly, but maybe today with some fly-arounds and other things that are going on, we can impress upon officials here in Washington and in the regional office that this is a true emergency, a disaster that needs to be attended to, and the Federal Government has a role to play in helping those individuals and municipalities that were affected by it.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WORST OILSPILL IN RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

Mr. PELL. Mr. President, I rise to share with my colleagues the latest news on what has been identified as the worst oilspill in Rhode Island's history.

As many of you may know from news accounts, the barge *North Cape*, carrying a cargo of about 4 million gallons of heating oil, and the tug *Scandia*

grounded off the southern Rhode Island coast in the early evening on Friday.

The grounding followed a fire that broke out Friday afternoon on the tug, later engulfed the vessel and required the subsequent last minute evacuation of the captain and crew by the U.S. Coast Guard.

That evacuation was successful because of the enormous courage and skill of the Coast Guard rescue team, who did not hesitate to put themselves at great personal risk to rescue the captain and crew.

Coast Guard Fireman Adam Cravey and Seaman Walt Trimble, who were the first to arrive at the scene aboard a 44-foot Coast Guard boat, found six men wearing survival suits huddled on the bow of the tug—which was engulfed by fire.

The six jumped into the water to swim to the Coast Guard boat and Fireman Cravey, who was in a wet suit and was tethered to the Coast Guard boat, jumped in to assist them. All were safely ashore about 2½ hours after the first emergency call.

Mr. President, I want to emphasize that this rescue was conducted under extremely difficult conditions, including high winds and rough seas, in the frigid waters of the North Atlantic.

I understand that the Coast Guard had warned mariners from Maine to New Jersey of a period of potentially dangerous winds from 40 to 50 knots, with higher gusts, and seas from 15 to 25 feet.

It was under extraordinarily difficult winter storm conditions that the Coast Guard effected the rescue and attempted, unsuccessfully, to prevent the barge and burning tug from running aground. The barge, dragging the burning tug, grounded in shallow water off Matunuck Point Beach, near Point Judith.

Pounded by strong winds and high seas, the 340-foot, single-hull barge began to spill oil early Saturday from holes in at least two places. Current estimates of the spill are in the range of 828,000 gallons.

Transportation Secretary Frederico Peña, Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Kramek, and other Federal officials came to us in Rhode Island to evaluate the spill on Saturday, as efforts continued to contain the escaping oil and offload what oil remained aboard the barge.

Rhode Island Gov. Lincoln Almond appealed for Federal help on Sunday, declaring a state of emergency and identifying the spill as "the worst in Rhode Island's history and one of the worst ever off the coast of New England."

The toll on marine life apparently has already been heavy. Thousands of oil-coated lobsters, dead and living, have washed up along several hundred yards of beach near the barge. Dozens of seabirds have died and scores more have been coated in oil.

The barge is close to Moonstone Beach, a breeding ground for the en-

dangered piping plover and the Trustum Pond National Wildlife Refuge, an environmentally fragile habitat. An estimated 75,000 waterfowl live in the refuge area, including rare harlequin ducks.

Fishing also was banned in a 105 square-mile area, from Point Judith south to waters east of Block Island. A number of shellfishing areas also were closed.

The good news is that Rhode Islanders rose to the occasion. Hundreds of Rhode Islanders, their efforts coordinated by Save the Bay, volunteered to help the emergency response crews by cleaning everything from beaches to birds. The Coast Guard was magnificent in its response.

Additional good news came with a phone call from President Clinton to Governor Almond, assuring him that funds would be made available for the cleanup and fishing industries.

This tragedy has not yet played itself out, but we should ask some hard questions when we have all the facts.

Among the most obvious questions, that have crossed my mind: Why were the tug and barge underway in such treacherous and dangerous weather conditions? Should we have weather related restrictions on the transportation of toxic or hazardous materials in coastal waterways? Could this incident have been avoided by better fire-safety procedures or by a more rapid response? Could it have been mitigated by more aggressive prevention and containment measures?

It is unfortunate, Mr. President, that this barge was not of the new double-hulled design—which I have long advocated. I understand that it leaked from 9 of its 14 containment holds. A double-hull might have made all the difference between an incident and a disaster.

Finally, I think that everyone would benefit from a thorough review of the coordination of our emergency response to oilspills. We should make sure that every agency with a role in this crisis, worked smoothly with every other agency.

It has been a difficult time in Rhode Island and, unfortunately, our difficulties are not over. We do not yet know the extent of our disaster. On the Federal level, we should do all we can to expedite the assistance and expertise that is required for that recovery.

In closing, I emphasize the fine job the Coast Guard did and my own respect for their gallant service.

I yield the floor.

HYPOCRISY

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, I rise to call the attention of my colleagues today to an item or two that have been in the news of late. The theme that unites them loosely is the theme of "hypocrisy." "Hypocrisy," I have said, may well be the "original sin" in American political life.

The first of these subjects has been reported upon in many of this Nation's

newspapers, but as of yet has been insufficiently remarked about among the denizens here in the village of Washington.

Lately we have been in the midst of one horrific battle over the budget, gnashing our teeth, wailing, and howling to the heavens—it would be the envy of King Lear—and referring to each other by every manner of cruel epithets.

What are the differences that divide us, to occasion this level of hysteria, hype, and hoorah and fingerpointing? Often the differences are in reality very minimal, such as a difference of all of the sum of \$7 as to where Medicare part B premium should be in the year 2002. That was the entirety of the difference between the President's first position and the Congress' position. That is where we drew the first "battle line," the first line, the first gauntlet thrown.

In my view, it would be just as silly to let this difference sink a budget agreement as it would be to let the size of the tax cut sink an agreement. These are not sufficient causes, in my estimation, to fail to meet our obligation to future generations.

One would know little of the minimal size of this difference from watching the evening news, but coincidentally, 7 bucks was the amount that part B premium stood to go up next year, from \$46 a month to \$53 a month, regardless of one's net worth or income, really not too destructive in society, especially when we do not have any test of income or wealth.

I wonder if all of my colleagues fully realize what has been happening out there in the private insurance market while these wretched hostilities have been taking place here in Washington. We have seen some most remarkable increases in insurance premiums, and one of them, ironically enough, comes to our gentle citizens courtesy of the American Association of Retired Persons, the AARP. You have heard me speak of them before. Yes, I have from time to time gently touched upon their activities.

Now I have in hand an article describing how this determined, dedicated and obsessed nonprofit organization is raising its medigap insurance premiums for the next 6 months, after which, who knows, they might even rise again. This is the same AARP, I remind my colleagues, the courageous and dogged defenders of the poor, the downtrodden, and the elderly, these are the very same folks who descend upon Washington in droves and hordes to tell us if Medicare part B premiums were to go up—these being voluntary premiums, please recall, voluntary premiums; you do not have to join—but that when this terrible thing happens, mind you, going from \$46 to \$53 next year regardless of your net worth or your income—and you were not forced into it and it was not any part of an original contract, you got in because it was the best deal in town—and if it