



Tilly O'Neill-Gordon, MP  
MIRAMICHI

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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### *Commemorate the Anniversary of the Escuminac Disaster.*

#### *In honour of the fishermen who lost their lives*

Ottawa, Ontario - This year marks the 51th anniversary of the worst work-related disaster to occur in New Brunswick. This catastrophe, known as the Escuminac Disaster, took place during the night of June 19 - 20, 1959. That night a freak storm prevented twenty-two of them from returning. During the gales and swamping wakes of the storm, twenty-two boats were lost to the sea. Thirty-five men and boys drowned, the youngest victim was only 13. Drifting their salmon nets on a calm bay, were violently taken by a storm described as being, "two days and nights of terror".

Tilly O'Neill Gordon, MP for Miramichi, is feeling very sad on this anniversary. "I grew up in Escuminac and I can still feel the pain all the people felt after that tragic night of June 20, 1959, when we lost 35 members of our community, she said."

In 1969, thanks to financial support from the Beaverbrook Foundation, Acadian artist Claude Roussel sculpted his work, entitled Les Pêcheurs - The Fishermen, in stone. Residents of the Escuminac area organized a fundraising campaign to cover the cost of a base for the monument, as well as the bronze plaques on which the names of the victims and survivors were inscribed. It stands on the wharf in Escuminac.

For many fishermen, the monument is a reminder of the perils of the work at sea, a warning to use care and show respect for the ocean because nature is more powerful than anything else. As long as there are fishermen, it is said, the Escuminac Memorial will not be without a purpose.

"In memory of all the families, who suffered, on this tragic day, God Bless Their Souls. My thought and prayers are with the families and friends of the deceased", concluded O'Neill Gordon.

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