

## "I knew him very well:" Jones

### Liberals call for airport upgrades after fatal crash

BY DAVE BARTLETT [dbartlett@thetelegram.com](mailto:dbartlett@thetelegram.com)

THE TELEGRAM

---

The leader of the province's official Opposition flew with the pilot killed in Sunday's fatal crash at the Port Hope Simpson airport, only a week before the accident.

Jim Hudson was killed in the crash while attempting to medevac a patient out of the town on the coast of Labrador.

"I knew him very well, actually and have been flying with him for a number of years," Yvonne Jones told The Telegram Tuesday.

Because there are a number of remote communities in Jones' district of Cartwright-L'Anse Au Clair, Jones often hires chartered aircraft to go into places like William's Harbour and Black Tickle.

"Jim was the one that was flying me most of the time, in fact I flew with him just last week," said Jones.

She called Hudson a very competent pilot who took her around in a number of different types of planes.

"(I) usually sat in the cockpit with him and I can tell you, I've never had an uncomfortable moment on board the plane with him."

Jones said most, if not all, of the 12,000 hours of flying Hudson had logged was in Labrador and the Arctic.

"He was used to the terrain, he was used to the climate," she said.

Jones said after the crash she started thinking about the requests her party has made to the government for a regional airport for the region where the crash took place.

She said in 2005 the province even commissioned a report which recommended a new site for the Port Hope Simpson airport due to hazardous terrain near the gravel runway and the installation of navigational aids and enhanced lighting.

Jones said she's bringing this up now only after talking to the family to make sure they were OK with her speaking out.

While an investigation is still underway into what caused the crash, Jones said weather was probably a factor.

The RCMP told The Telegram Monday Hudson reported foggy conditions to air traffic control before the crash.

Jones also said Hudson made several attempts to land before the crash.

She hopes the province will now go back and look at the report and make the necessary improvements to the Port Hope Simpson airport.

"The reality here ... is that people on the coast of Labrador have no other choice but to use this air service," Jones said.

She said the coast is isolated for part of the year and even when it isn't, medical services are so far away that air travel is the only option to get sick or injured people to a hospital quickly.

"Jim Hudson lost his life on Sunday trying to save the life of another person,"

— RCMP photo



James Joseph Hudson's twin-engine plane crashed Sunday.

said Jones. "Something he's been doing practically every day."

Transportation Minister Trevor Taylor wasn't available for comment Tuesday.