



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, April 9, 2002**  
**(Part A)**

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**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, April 9, 2002

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*English*]

### ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

**Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a number of order in council appointments made recently by the government.

\* \* \*

• (1005)

### BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

**Hon. Rey Pagtakhan (Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today is a very special day in the annals of Canadian military history and in the life of our country.

On this day, 85 years ago, April 9, 1917 to be exact, the Battle of Vimy Ridge was fought and won by Canadians where all previous attempts by other allied forces had failed.

May I note at this juncture that Canada's veterans lost a dedicated and treasured friend with the passing of the Queen Mother. She was laid to rest this morning and I would ask members to join me in a moment of silence in her memory.

[*Editor's Note: The House stood in silence*]

**Mr. Rey Pagtakhan:** The fateful battle: It was 5.30 in the morning. The ground would tremble and surely each man felt fear and thought of home. The assault turned out to be the swiftest and most complete victory of the war. Within three days Canadians had captured the entire ridge.

The Canadian success at Vimy marked a profound turning point for the allies. General Byng, commander of the Canadian corps and later a Governor General, would write:

There they stood on Vimy Ridge [on the 9th day of April 1917]...and there was forged a nation, a nation tempered by fires of sacrifice—

However the cost of nationhood was high. Three thousand, five hundred and ninety-eight would lie still forever on French soil. For

the families of the dead, the price of victory would also be very steep.

Allow me to share some lines from one letter written by Percy Winthrop McClare on Monday, April 16, about a week and a half after his first exposure to battle.

My Dear Mother,

I can only write a short letter this time...as I have been in the trenches for nine days... You have no doubt heard...of the capture of Vimy Ridge. I was in the whole of that battle and it was Hell—

The letter went on to say:

—Mother Dear, please don't do any worrying as it does no good. But remember me in your prayer... Your loving son, Winnie.

Thirty days later, Private Percy Winthrop McClare, age 19, was killed in action.

The story of Vimy is more than a major triumph for Canada. It was also the story of courage and valour of the families back home.

Those young men came of age under very brutal circumstances: in the tunnels and trenches and on the barbed wire fences.

It is these images, as awful as they are, that we must keep in our hearts and memories and pass on to succeeding generations. That is the promise of remembrance we have made to all our veterans.

At 11 o'clock this morning, a number of us will gather at the National War Memorial to honour that pledge of remembrance to all who served and to all who gave their lives in the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

I had the honour this past Sunday to lay, on behalf of the Government of Canada, the wreath of reverence at the Canadian Vimy Memorial in France.

Thirteen high school students from across Canada joined me, as did veterans and many others: officials of Vimy and officials of the government of France.

Standing in front of the Canadian Vimy Memorial was truly an experience I will not forget. For truly the Canadian memorial at Vimy tells it all. It symbolizes supreme sacrifice and heroic deeds. Human values, peace, freedom, justice, truth and knowledge are reflected in the statues of the memorial.

These human values are universal in space and time. They are about life and dignity.

As we salute our Vimy veterans, let us also salute Canadians in uniform who have been called to take up arms to serve the cause of peace and freedom in a far away land.

*Routine Proceedings*

The Battle of Vimy Ridge will continue to inspire a nation.

● (1010)

**Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, as I left the coffee shop this morning I glanced down at one of the papers. It read “April 9, 2002, 85 years ago the birth of our nation”. As the hon. Minister of Veterans Affairs has alluded, this indeed was a turning point in the history of Canada.

It is hard to imagine that Canada was not quite 50 years old when the battle of Vimy Ridge took place. It was there that Canadians distinguished themselves in battle. On that day, very much like the weather today only it was colder with snow and sleet in the air, the order was given. It was hell but the Canadians three days later had performed what the other allied forces could not have done and were unable to do in capturing Vimy Ridge.

This day, April 9, 2002, is also a double remembrance day because, as the hon. minister alluded, today we buried our Queen. I would like to join these two remembrances together because they do have a commonality.

On this day we said goodbye to Queen Mum. I watched part of that on television this morning. I was reminded that as a boy, I stood on Dewdney Avenue in Regina and watched the Queen go by. That was in 1939, about 22 years after the battle. I remembered that trip. There was no pavement. There was a Model A. There was Mom, Dad and seven kids. All I remember about that was that my dad could reach through any part in that Model A and somehow find the back of my head. That day was revered in my memory because before the parade there was a line of veterans some who had experienced Vimy Ridge, so the two went together.

I would like to read into the records this morning a poem that I taught in school. I do not think it is in the literature books anymore but I remember this well. This poem is entitled “London Under Bombardment” and was written by Greta Briggs. It was the personification of the city of London. As we revere this day, this could well be the Queen Mum speaking. It reads:

I, WHO am known as London, have faced stern times before,  
 Having fought and ruled and traded for a thousand years and more;  
 I knew the Roman legions and the harsh-voiced Danish hordes;  
 I heard the Saxon revels, saw blood on the Norman swords.  
 But, though I am scarred by battle, my grim defenders vow  
 Never was I so stately nor so well-beloved as now.  
 The lights that burn and glitter in the exile's lonely dream,  
 The lights of Piccadilly, and those that used to gleam  
 Down Regent-street and Kingsway may now no longer shine,  
 But other lights keep burning, and their splendour, too, is mine,  
 Seen in the work-worn faces and glimpsed in the steadfast eyes  
 When little homes lie broken and death descends from the skies.  
 The bombs have shattered my churches, have torn my streets apart,  
 But they have not bent my spirit and they shall not break my heart.  
 For my people's faith and courage are lights of London town  
 Which still would shine in legends though my last broad bridge were down.

This morning as we look at Vimy Ridge and at the passing of Queen Mum, I am reminded that on the day of the battle of Vimy Ridge our Queen Mum, who we laid to rest today, was 17 years old. Through all that noise on Vimy Ridge, they told me they could hear faintly in London all the guns, bombing and blasting of artillery.

● (1015)

John McCrae wrote in his poem, which has been immortalized and which most Canadian students still learn by memory, the following:

To you from failing hands we throw  
 The torch; be yours to hold it high.

We have not always held that torch high. However this is not a day to deal with the negative. This is a day to deal with the positive. This is a day to deal with this great military day in our history. This is a day that we too can add with this remembrance our respect to the Queen.

November 11 last year was a great renewal. We noticed that across Canada attendance at November 11 services was up. I am very pleased, as a member of Her Majesty's loyal opposition, that the government recently moved toward funding work on the nation's cenotaphs, particularly that great white monument that stands in the sky, the Vimy Ridge monument. In the travelling society there perhaps is no other site in all the world that Canadians recognize so clearly.

I am very pleased that we hold this memory and we hold that torch high. We need to tell this story and we need to keep telling it.

● (1020)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Monday April 9, 1917, at precisely 5.30 p.m. was a landmark moment for Quebecers and Canadians.

Eighty-five years ago, while still a colony of the United Kingdom, Canada engaged in the first world war, without the experience some other countries had already had with war.

On that night of bone-chilling cold, four Canadian divisions, that is 20,000 Canadian soldiers, including several Quebecers, surged out of the trenches and up the shell-strewn southwestern slope of Vimy Ridge. They succeeded in pushing a six kilometer segment of the front line back four kilometres. This mission, considered secondary when it was assigned to them, was transformed into a success that was all the more remarkable because it was unexpected.

Vimy Ridge was one of the dominant points on the plains of northern France. The German hold on it had already been challenged by the French and the British in 1915 and 1916. It constituted the main objective of these first offensives, but was not to be retaken until the third, in April 1917. In 1915, the French were nearly successful, but were beaten back by the Germans and sustained heavy losses. During the subsequent attempt, the British set off enormous mines within German lines in an unsuccessful attempt to open up a path for their troops.

The offensive by the troops from Quebec and Canada led to Vimy Ridge finally being taken and contributed to the Allied victory.

*Routine Proceedings*

The losses were extremely heavy. Vimy Ridge was taken at the cost of 10,000 dead or wounded. These were volunteer soldiers, it must be remembered. Conscription was instituted after Vimy Ridge. Quebecers were, it must be pointed out, unwilling to fight in a war they did not feel was theirs. They did not want to see conscription imposed. There were demonstrations in Quebec City which were harshly put down. Even Wilfrid Laurier took a stand against conscription. Several Quebec leaders, however, encouraged the Canadian effort and were in favour of Quebec's and Canada's contribution to the victory of France and Britain.

Even though a number of Quebecers were forced to take part in World War I, we can only be proud of the contribution made, first by volunteer soldiers, and then by those who were drafted. It was also following the capture of Vimy Ridge that Canada gained recognition and began playing a greater role internationally. In that sense, the battle in which Quebec soldiers valiantly took part had a much greater impact than those who gave their lives might have thought.

The strength and courage of the soldiers who fought at Vimy and in World War I must be recognized. We must ensure that the memory of those who gave their lives, who did not want to go to war but answered the call nevertheless, is honoured.

Canada's two nations both contributed in a very significant and painful way, through the loss of lives, to the allied victory over the German invader. The moral duty to commemorate the wars of the past century brings us to meditate and respectfully remember those who died during the capture of Vimy Ridge and in World War I.

The Bloc Québécois wishes to pay tribute to the soldiers from Quebec and elsewhere who fought at Vimy and helped end World War I more quickly.

• (1025)

[*English*]

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour for me to speak on behalf of the NDP today in commemoration of the 85th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

Ten years ago I was part of the pilgrimage to the Vimy Memorial on the 75th anniversary, at which time I had the wonderful opportunity to get to know the 14 Vimy vets who were part of the delegation. They ranged in age at that time from over 100 years old to 93 years old. The 93 year old, whom the others called the kid, was a man by the name of Frank Bourne who lived in Vancouver but was also at one time from Winnipeg where he worked for the railway and supported the CCF. We got along well. I especially enjoyed his recollections of Winnipeg just after the war, including his memories of the Winnipeg general strike in 1919.

I will always be grateful for the gift of getting to know him and the other Vimy vets who belonged to the generation of my grandfathers, one of whom served at Vimy Ridge but neither of whom was blessed with the same longevity as those who were able to mark the 75th anniversary of their participation in that nation building but nevertheless tragic event in which so many of their comrades died.

I note with sadness that, as the old hymn says so well, time like an ever-flowing stream bears all its sons away, and that this year there was for the first time no Vimy vets at the ceremony in France. At the

going down of the sun we will remember them as I am now remembering my grandfather, Robert Nisbet Blaikie, Sr., who was a piper and a soldier, along with his older brother Jim, a drummer, in the 1st Canadian Montreal Rifles, recruited in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. They were part of the 3rd Division, 8th Brigade.

By coincidence, the tunnels preserved at the Vimy Memorial Park are those that were used by this group, tunnels that would later be viewed by visitors from all over the world, sometimes guided for a time by a great-granddaughter of Robert Blaikie, my daughter Rebecca who worked there as a guide in the late 1990s.

Each new generation needs to be aware of the sacrifices of those who have gone before and I commend the government for taking young Canadians on the pilgrimage this year. The Vimy vets I knew would have been pleased.

On a final note, may I say what a coincidence it is that I should have this opportunity to remember my Grandpa Blaikie on this day, the day of the Queen Mother's funeral, who herself lost a brother in World War I. Twenty-two years after the Battle of Vimy Ridge, in 1939, my grandfather played the pipes for the King and Queen as their train stopped in Biggar, Saskatchewan to meet with the assembled throng. As a piper myself, I note with satisfaction the role that pipes played today in bearing the Queen Mother, a descendent of Robert the Bruce, to her final resting place.

When I visited the Vimy Memorial in 1992, I searched the over 11,000 names on the memorial for the name of a man known only as a name to a family in Transcona that I know well. His name was George Esselmont. He and his brother Bob built a duplex on Whittier Avenue in Transcona just before the war, to live in together with their families after the war. George would never do so. He was and is among those Canadians who were killed at Vimy and have no known grave. He grew not old as his brother who was left grew old. Age did not weary him nor the years condemn, but he never got to live out his dreams and live life to the full, like 66,000 other Canadians who died in the first world war.

May we always remember their sacrifice and honour it not only with courage in war, as Canadians have been ready to do when called upon, but also with the courage that it sometimes takes to fight for peace in a world given over to the temptation and the power of war.

May God grant that our remembrance today and in days to come be a source of wisdom and discernment as we make our way in a present and into a future that is still not free of the tragedy and the evils of war.

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the minister for his kind words of remembrance. I appreciate the opportunity to rise today to honour an important day in our national history.

*Routine Proceedings*

We are not only paying our respects to those who gave their lives at Vimy, but also to the Queen Mother. Being in the House of Commons as the representative for Canada's first incorporated city by royal charter, the only one in Canada, it is very dear to my heart to be here today and go to the Vimy memorial service as well as to the Queen Mother's service.

Eighty-five years ago it was the military men of an emerging nation, a Canada still in its infancy, who obtained a crucial allied victory where the ancient powers of Europe had failed.

I had the distinct honour of going to Vimy to bring back the remains of the unknown soldier. I believe it was the most moving experience in my life when, as the hon. member from the NDP mentioned, we went down into some of the trenches. I could not believe that our men had to go there for you and me to be here today, Mr. Speaker, and for all of our colleagues and people of Canada to have the freedom that we have today.

I remember pieces of a YMCA mug that were found in the trenches dating back to those days. I took a picture of it because the young people who are there and look after all of the area around the Vimy memorial found those pieces in the trenches and put them together.

It was a moment that defined us as a people, where our men in uniform were once nation builders and national heroes. The victory at Vimy Ridge solidified our military credentials and gave clear notice that Canadians would be the guardians of peace and freedom in the world, and they still are. The territory seized and occupied as a result of the Vimy offensive gave the allies an invaluable tactical advantage. Above all else it is the courage of our Canadian soldiers that history has remembered most vividly, and rightfully so.

The same dedication to duty and selfless risk that was present on that battlefield 85 years ago has found itself repeatedly clothed in the uniforms of our armed forces in the decades that followed. Even today our soldiers, in the defence of those values Canadians share with the majority of the world's people, have been a source of grave and constant pride to all of us.

The debt we owe to our veterans is a debt we will never fully repay. The sacrifices they made in the great wars, both for us and for future generations, have left us in awe of them.

This past weekend I had an opportunity to visit our veterans hospital in Saint John, New Brunswick. It is amazing to see those veterans as they sit in wheelchairs. I always smile because when I come in they seem to know that I am there to see if there are needs to be addressed for them. God bless each and every one of them. They have earned our respect and they deserve our praise, not just on November 11, but every day.

When we brought back the remains of the unknown soldier the dominion president himself at that time was here. When the remains were placed in the Hall of Honour the next day we were told that the President of the Dominion Commander of the Royal Canadian Legion had passed away. It was he who fought to have the recognition for those who served and gave their lives at Vimy for us.

● (1030)

The spirit of that April day has been forever etched in the French countryside as the names of the fallen have been etched in the stone of that great white monument at Vimy.

In a moment I will leave this Chamber along with minister and other colleagues to join with a group of veterans at the national cenotaph to mark in a more formal way the accomplishments of the Vimy victory.

On this solemn anniversary we remember all who have offered their lives in the service of our country and we pray for those who are, as we speak, carrying on that great military tradition in the defence of liberty.

We will remember them.

\* \* \*

● (1035)

**PETITIONS**

BILL C-15B

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition signed by over 1,000 people in my riding which is the most recent manifestation of interest in Bill C-15B which the House is considering. This legislation deals with cruelty to animals, particularly pets.

These petitioners point to several recent highly publicized examples of animal abuse and neglect. Sadly, some of those were in the general Peterborough area. For example, the cruel drowning of a German shepherd which resulted in the establishment of the Lost Shepherd Society which is behind this particular petition, and a dog that was dragged behind a pick-up truck and badly injured as a result.

This petition includes the signatures of many frontline workers: veterinarians, people who work and volunteer in humane societies and so on. They know Bill C-15B is before the House and they call upon parliament to expedite Bill C-15B in the process of enacting it into law and ask all members to act in good conscience in voting for the legislation.

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**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement government orders will be extended by 26 minutes.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***EXCISE ACT, 2001**

The House resumed from March 22 consideration of the motion that Bill C-47, an act respecting the taxation of spirits, wine and tobacco and the treatment of ships' stores, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am continuing an interrupted speech. The speech was interrupted about two weeks ago when 1.30 p.m. rolled around on a Friday afternoon in the middle of my riveting presentation.

I do not know whether I hold the record on the interruption of speeches but I do remember one in which my speech was interrupted in early December. I do not remember which year but I completed the speech the following year in November. I remember that because it was an 11 month interruption of a speech.

The bill we are debating today is a bill on taxation. I am sure all members present have taken the time to read *Hansard* from two weeks ago Friday and have re-read the first part of my speech so they have the continuity. In case some have not I will reiterate again that the theme of my speech is the insatiable appetite of the government for tax dollars. Bill C-47 is about taxation.

I talked about the three different ways in which the government can tax individuals and corporations. There are actually four different ways in which the government can earn revenue, directly and by taxation. The three different ways of taxation are: first, taking a portion of everything that a person owns, property taxes for instance; second, taking a portion of everything that we earn through income tax; and third, taking a portion of everything we spend, the much loved GST is an example of that. Many provinces have provincial sales taxes as well.

I live in a province in which there is no provincial sales tax. To my knowledge we have never had a sales tax in Alberta. Until that hated GST came in it was actually wonderful to go to a store. If someone bought something that had a price of \$5.99 and gave \$6.00 in payment, a penny was given back. There was no computation of a tax. There was no sales tax. I would propose that perhaps the lack of a sales tax was one of the things that helped to make Alberta so strong that it is now one of only two provinces that is a net payer into the scheme of equalization.

I went to school in Portland, Oregon for a year and was interested to find that at least at that time Oregon was one of only two states that had no sales tax. Somehow I am attracted to governments that do not have sales tax.

Economists tell us that sales taxes are a better form of taxation than income tax and that reducing income tax actually has a greater positive effect on the economy than the reduction of sales taxes. However, there is a huge psychological difference to that. When one earns money, especially if the income tax is deducted at source, one never notices it in a way because one just does not ever get to see it. If we pay too much tax at the end of the year at filing time, we find that there is a bit of a rebate and everyone is happy that they got money back.

I do not know how many people stop to think that it is money the government has taken away from them. It is part of their earnings. The government took more than it was entitled to and is now giving it back. We should be happy that it gives it back in the same sense that we would be happy if someone robbed us and gave us back the money.

It is our own money and it is important for us to never forget that when it comes to taxes the money belongs to the person who earns it. Governments who take part of that money away, either through income taxes or sales taxes, need to always be cognizant of the fact that they are trustees of the money, spending it on behalf of the public for the public good.

● (1040)

I am very incensed when I find the present government taking taxpayers' money and way too often spending it for the government's good and not for the public good. I will give the House an example of that. The Minister of Industry happened to be in my riding about a week ago, where he made a great speech and held a meeting at one of the new hotels. All the local dignitaries were there. Everybody was very impressed way out there in rural Alberta in the community of Sherwood Park, which is Canada's largest hamlet with a population of around 45,000. It is still considered a hamlet because it has never been registered.

At the meeting he made some announcements about federal government spending. What was curious was that these were not new announcements. They were announcements that had already been made in the budget. The government is great at announcing and announcing. It seems as if the government multiplies the use of these announcements for political reasons.

The minister basically said "Are we not wonderful?" because the federal government was giving out some money to be used for research. He said that this would be a great boon to our economy, our competitiveness, our creativity and our productivity. He used all the nice buzzwords. He gets a lot of mileage out of announcing \$150 million. It takes just the snap of a finger for a Liberal to announce \$150 million. A couple of Challengers and all sorts of other things can be bought with \$150 million.

There he was announcing it, but I contend simply this: If that money is to be spent for the public good, why does he not just send a cheque? If the money is to go to the university, a cheque should be sent to the university along with instructions on how to use the money and how to report on its accountability. Instead we find the minister making a big announcement.

In another example, I remember the Prime Minister announcing the opening of a call centre in, I believe, Prince Edward Island. The government, through HRDC, helped to fund the introduction of this call centre. The reason I mention this is that we are talking of taxpayers and using their money in trust on behalf of the citizens of this great country of ours. There was the Prime Minister announcing to the people of Prince Edward Island that a grant would enable them to have a new call centre and would provide employment in their community.

*Government Orders*

On the surface that sounded pretty good, but the reason I remember it is that the response was incredible. I heard about it on the car radio when I was driving. The person who was given this money, and I cannot remember if it was the local mayor or the entrepreneur of the business, told the Prime Minister that he had come through for them when they needed him and they in turn would show the Prime Minister they would be there for him in the next election. That was the gist of the statement.

It ought not to work that way. If the money is needed, it should be spent. If it is not needed, it should not be spent. It is not right to tie it together with the expectation of votes in return. I think the Prime Minister would have been right on if he had told that individual that giving him the money had nothing to do with votes. This was taxpayers' money and for some reason it was taken away from people who earned it and brought there so others could earn some money. I know there is an argument there. We could say it created a new business and jobs for those people who then would generate revenue and pay income tax. They would be paying into the system instead of drawing out of the system.

●(1045)

I know we can make those arguments. Maybe some of them are even justified, but I object strenuously when taxpayers' dollars are used for political purposes, as in my riding with the Minister of Industry making an announcement that had nothing to do with Liberal politics or like the Prime Minister in Prince Edward Island making that announcement.

Here we are talking about increased taxation. Make no mistake about it. Bill C-47 increases the revenue of the federal government by about a quarter of a billion dollars. That is what this is about. It is about increased taxation. It is a rationalization of some taxation. In the case of cigarettes, for example, in different provinces the rates are increasing incrementally. As I said in the previous part of my speech, based on the amount by which those taxes were decreased previously, they are now being restored.

I think I have made my case very strongly. I am sure that all the members here, having listened to my argument, will now have a new resolve in their hearts to never, ever misuse the money that has been given to the government in trust by the taxpayers of Canada to be used for the public good. I hope that is true.

It may surprise the House to know that my present inclination is actually to vote in favour of the bill, a bill that would increase government revenue and taxation. My primary reason for voting in favour of it is that it will increase the price of and thereby hopefully reduce the consumption of cigarettes. I have given speeches on this topic in various contexts before. Whether it is my colleagues in the House, my friends back home or one of my staffers who may be watching this speech right now and who is currently on a quit smoking program, I encourage them to carry through with quitting smoking. Perhaps this tax helped that staffer to make that decision, although I have not actually discussed that detail with him. I would like to encourage him to carry through with that resolve for health reasons and for economic reasons. The best thing we can do is to discourage young people from smoking, thereby ruining their health.

There are also the costs of smoking. I have related before how when I taught mathematics I encouraged my students, as part of the

work they did in learning to use their calculators and computers, to compute how much they would have in the bank if instead of smoking they were to put that money into an RRSP over their lifetimes. I used to have them evaluate the mathematical formulas, math and finance exponentials and things like that.

After they evaluated that, which came to around \$1.3 million as I recall, I asked whether they knew what they had computed. I went through it and showed them that the 45 meant 45 years from the age of 20 when one started working until 65 when one retired. The .1 at that time was 10% the rate of return that one could get on an RRSP and the \$1.3 million was the balance in the RRSP on retirement. They could retire with \$1.3 million in the bank if in their lifetimes they would put their smokes money into an RRSP instead of blowing it up in smoke, so the economic argument was strong. I am proud to say that I had a number of students who actually quit on that account. That is my primary reason for voting in favour of Bill C-47. I regret that my time has now elapsed, but I hope that the Liberals will hear my message and act on it.

●(1050)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this second reading debate on Bill C-47. I will say in advance that the Bloc Québécois is going to support this bill. We have two reservations, however, and, over the coming weeks, we are going to try to convince the government that we are right about two particular aspects of this bill.

Why are we supporting this bill? Because it simplifies matters in connection with wines, spirits and tobacco, specifically by harmonizing sales taxes, excise taxes with the general taxation system, and by creating compatibility among the commercial accounting periods. This is a clear improvement from a tax administration point of view. However, through you, Mr. Speaker, I wish to draw the government's attention to two problems related to this bill.

The first has to do with the beer sector, microbreweries in particular. The second has to do with small vineyards, which have been appearing in increasing numbers in recent years, such that in Quebec and in Canada, this has become a very flourishing industry which is winning international product quality awards.

*Government Orders*

In the case of beer, there is a major problem, a problem of fairness, as it were, internationally. In other countries, such as France, Belgium and even the United States, microbreweries are exempt from excise tax. Internationally, this is accepted under WTO rules. There is a special exemption for microbreweries so that they can perform, develop and support numerous regional communities, most of them small, as well as compete with large national breweries.

This is the case everywhere else, but not here. It is unfortunate that, in Bill C-47, the government has not taken into consideration the fact that microbreweries in Quebec and in Canada generate some 3,500 direct and indirect jobs; I would say that three-quarters of them are direct jobs and approximately 1,000 are indirect jobs. It is unfortunate that the government has not taken into consideration this important contribution by microbreweries. As opposed to the United States, for example, where the excise tax is 9 cents a hectolitre, in Canadian dollars, here there is still a tax of 28 cents a hectolitre.

Clearly, advocates of economic liberalism, even in the United States, are looking out for microbreweries and recognizing their contribution. Such is not the case here. But it is the case in France, in Germany, in Belgium, and in the United States. In Canada, however, microbreweries are treated the same as the big breweries that have much greater financial and technological resources to provide stiff competition for microbreweries.

Is this government able to understand that affirmative discrimination, permitted under trade rules, permitted in a world that is moving toward globalization, and permitted within the framework of globalization, could help microbreweries expand and provide fair competition for large breweries from virtually every country around the world? Would it not be a good idea for the government to get in line with all of the major industrialized countries and help its microbreweries?

We will be presenting an amendment to provide microbreweries with a partial excise exemption for the first 75,000 hectolitres, this is approximately the same level of taxation applied to microbrewery beer in the U.S. This would amount to a 60% reduction in the excise tax for the first 75,000 hectolitres produced by microbreweries, whether it be Unibroue or other microbreweries in Quebec and Canada.

• (1055)

This would be of great help to them and would constitute fair treatment. As I said, Unibroue's competitors benefit from this exemption, moreover. It is recognized and allowed under international rules.

So, as I said earlier, we are going to introduce an amendment to this bill at report stage, in hopes that the federal government, with its sizeable surplus accumulated over the past five years, could contribute some \$15 million annually. This is not something that would cost the government all that much.

I would remind hon. members that the microbreweries contribute about twice as much in terms of taxes to the various levels of government, a little more than half of this to the federal level. Even with application of such a measure, the federal government would still come out on top. It would still be receiving net taxes from the microbreweries and would help maintain, even increase, employ-

ment in a sector that has undergone phenomenal expansion over the past 15 years. This measure would cost between \$10 million and \$15 million. That is not much to ensure that the existing 3,500 microbrewery sector jobs continue to exist, and even that this sector could become a promising and dynamic one in the years to come as far as job creation is concerned.

There are certain problems in this bill, including one concerning small wineries. As hon. members are no doubt aware—and some Liberal colleagues are involved in wine making, moreover—there has been a considerable expansion as far as small wineries are concerned in Quebec and in Canada over the past 25 years. When I was an economist for the Union des producteurs agricoles, I witnessed the birth of some of the great Quebec wineries. Back in 1986, investment in this sector was just beginning, for instance in l'Orpailleur, in Montérégie.

I was there in the early days of this sector, which has developed from its early, more amateur days to the respectability it enjoys today because of the award-winning, quality products to which I referred at the beginning of my speech. Quebec and Canadian small vineyards have been raking in the medals in recent years on the international scene for the quality of their vintages

Small vineyards are subject to a tax of 51 cents per litre. This is significantly more than elsewhere, including in France, Belgium, Italy and even in the United States. Again, we are asking that small vineyards be treated fairly.

Let us take the example of a vineyard that produces 200,000 bottles. This is not much, considering that, at the international level, large vineyards' production is 10 and 20 times larger on average, including in the United States. What the government could do—and we will again propose an amendment to this effect—is to provide exemption from this 51 cent tax per litre on the first 200,000 bottles.

Again, this exemption would be acceptable from a trade point of view and it would meet all the requirements of international treaties, including the one with the World Trade Organization. Such an exemption would also meet the requirements and provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement, and it would help small vineyards give additional momentum to their performance.

The cost of this exemption to the federal government would be ridiculously low, but it would really help small vineyards. It would cost the government less than half a million dollars per year, \$350,000 in fact. This is very little, but for small vineyards in Quebec and in Canada, it would mean a lot. It would help them tremendously. Why? Because the competition is very fierce for small vineyards. It is very fierce with large international vineyards, and also with exports from small vineyards in the United States and elsewhere in the world.

*Government Orders*

•(1100)

Once again, we are going to bring forward an amendment so that small vineyards with sales under approximately \$2 million annually could be exempt from this tax.

Small vineyards are now working hard on quality and the development of complex varieties of vine. They are making incredible efforts to break into the international market. The quality of wine in Quebec and in Canada is therefore good, and there has been incredible improvement in recent years.

In my view, even more could be done. I am thinking of l'Orpailleur; I mentioned l'Orpailleur, in Montérégie, earlier. I am also thinking of Clos Saint-Denis, in Saint-Denis-sur-Richelieu. These are two small vineyards whose owners I know which have been making amazing progress, year after year, in research and development to improve the quality of their products. They enter all the international competitions and win awards.

It would be worth improving Bill C-47 by incorporating these two amendments. It would not cost the government very much, but it would give a tremendous boost to two flourishing industries of which we are proud. Throughout Quebec and Canada, people are very proud of the efforts being made by the microbreweries, of the quality of their products, and the same goes for small vineyards.

Again, we will be supporting Bill C-47. However, we hope that, at the various stages, the government will understand that it is to the advantage of all Quebecers and all Canadians to approve the two amendments put forward.

[English]

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will say a few words about the bill before the House today as well.

Bill C-47 it is a technical bill. It is a bill we in the House support. It would impose a levy on spirits, wines and tobacco products. It would defer payment of duties on spirits and wines to the wholesale level, place domestic and imported products on equal footing, impose tight controls on possession of non-duty paid products and so on. It is a technical bill that would implement some tax changes. There has been a review of the bill. We in my party have no real problems with its technical proposals.

I will comment on a couple of things in the bill. One is the tax on tobacco. I agree that there should be a higher tax on tobacco products in Canada. The biggest health care expenditures we have in Canada are a result of smoking and all the ailments and health problems it causes.

There has been an unofficial agreement between the provinces to raise the tobacco tax. It has happened in Alberta. It happened in the Saskatchewan budget two weeks ago. I suspect the same thing will happen in Manitoba shortly and in other provinces across the country where the price of cigarettes is in roughly the \$9 range. The revenues could be used to promote a non-smoking campaign to show the hazards of smoking, particularly for young people. In most cases high cigarette prices are a deterrent for young people to start smoking.

There is a problem on the other side of the issue. A lot of people who smoke are lower income people. When the price of cigarettes gets high it becomes a hardship on them because they are addicted to cigarettes and tobacco products. We get caught in a difficult situation. We are doing the right thing in terms of health and principle, yet at the same time we are catching people who are already addicted to tobacco.

It is a long term process. People need to be educated about the hazards of tobacco. We must make every effort to get people off cigarettes. This involves federal and provincial government campaigns through schools and the like. This is one of the things Bill C-47 talks about.

I will mention two or three things that are not in the bill but which are important when it comes to taxation policy. We have had a government over the last while that has decided to make lowering taxes a huge priority. Before the last election campaign in the fall of 2000 it brought in a budget that would lower taxes over five years by some \$100 billion. That was an attractive thing for a lot of Canadian people.

On the other side of the ledger we have seen a tremendous rip-off of employers and employees through employment insurance premiums being much too high. We have seen increased restrictions on who qualifies for employment insurance benefits. The eligibility period has been reduced for those who do have benefits. We now have a surplus of about \$43 billion in the EI program. The surplus is predicted to hit \$50 billion sometime in the calendar year of 2003.

We are debating a tax bill today but at the same time we are turning a blind eye as a parliament to a great injustice. Workers are being taxed excessively for their employment. The \$43 billion EI surplus goes into the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The surplus is there to provide a balanced budget for the Minister of Finance. It is there to provide money for other programs. It is there to pay down the national debt.

•(1105)

Last year \$17 billion was put toward the national debt. The \$17 billion came directly from workers because of the excessive payments they made into the employment insurance fund. That is very unfair and actually should be a national scandal. The insurance fund should be roughly balanced at all times. I do not mind seeing a surplus of a few billion dollars because at a time when unemployment is low, we can build up a bit of a surplus and when the unemployment rate increases, without increasing the premiums or increasing them only marginally, we can have a deficit running for a while and come out balanced over a five or ten year period.

That was the whole purpose behind EI in terms of funding. Today about two-thirds of the surplus in the employment insurance fund is being generated by low income Canadians not by Canadians who make a lot of money. We tax the poor and people of modest incomes. That is not fair or just.

*Government Orders*

Many people have lost access to the EI fund because of the tighter qualifying restrictions brought in by the federal government. About one million families have lost access to the fund since 1993 when the Liberal government took office. About 41% of the people who have lost access to the benefits make less than \$15,000 a year. Another 23% who have lost access to EI benefits make between \$15,000 and \$20,000. That is 64% of the people who have lost access to these benefits make less than \$20,000 a year. Although they have lost access to the benefits, they still pay into the EI fund. They have provided the federal government with almost a \$43 billion surplus today and will provide \$50 billion over the next calendar year. It is a very unfair tax from a government that calls itself liberal. That is of course something that is not referred to in the bill that we are debating today.

I want to talk now about the airport security tax which was debated in the House and went into effect on April 1. It was no April fool's joke. It is a tax that will not fly in this country. It is a flat tax of \$24 on a return ticket. People will pay \$24 tax whether they fly from Saskatchewan to Prince Albert, Regina to Saskatoon, Edmonton to Grande Prairie, Edmonton to Calgary or Toronto to Ottawa. The tax is the same if one flies from Regina to London, Paris or New Delhi. There is no relationship whatsoever to the price of the ticket.

The tax will hurt small communities and short haul flights. It will harm the small airlines such as Athabasca Air in Saskatchewan which has short haul flights between Regina and Saskatoon. The \$24 on a \$100 or \$150 ticket is a huge percentage on a short haul flight. That is another example of a very unfair and unjust tax.

The tax will apply to everybody from the age of two and up. Infants up to the age of two who travelled with an adult could fly free and children between the ages of two and 12 received a large discount but not today. The \$24 tax applies equally to every Canadian citizen from the age of two and up. I see that as an example of an unfair tax.

Another reason the tax is unfair is that it was supposed to be implemented to pay for enhanced security at airports. No one in the House would oppose the idea of increased security at airports after September 11 but the tax will collect \$1 billion or \$2 billion more than is needed to provide for security at airports. In some cases the tax will collect as much as it costs to run the airport. In Saskatoon the city and airport authorities who studied this security tax estimated that Saskatoon will raise some \$5 million a year from passengers who fly through the Saskatoon airport. Meanwhile, it costs \$5 million a year to run the entire airport, which includes the costs of heating, cleaning and everything else.

● (1110)

Regina will raise \$4.5 million through the security tax paid by people leaving Regina. The cost of running the airport in Regina is about \$4.8 million. The money coming in from the security tax is enough to run the entire airport but it is supposed to cover security. No wonder people get cynical of politicians and governments when we have this kind of a regime and this kind of tax.

The security tax was implemented without an economic impact study being tabled by the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Transport. The most fundamental thing we do in parliament is taxation. The whole philosophy of parliament is representation. We

do not have taxation without representation. We have representation in the House of Commons from all the people of the country yet we have a bunch of puppets in the House of Commons who get up and say yeah to the Minister of Finance for implementing a new tax without tabling a study or a document in the House showing the impact it will have on the Canadian people.

It is like having a benevolent dictator sitting over there. Sometimes he is being very benevolent when he brings in the bill without a study.

What do we teach kids? Normally we teach them to do their research and their homework when they go to school. They need to have some data and facts on which to base an argument or write a term paper. However here in the House of Commons we bring in an airport security tax without an economic impact study. That does not make any sense. It would be like the member for Edmonton North going off and riding her motorcycle without learning how to ride a motorcycle.

**Miss Deborah Grey:** That would be very unwise.

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom:** That would be extremely unwise. However here we bring in an airport tax without an economic impact study to see what the impact of that tax will be on communities, on the country and on the travel industry. I do not think it makes any sense.

The last point I want to make concerns a new vision of taxation in the country or in the world. I refer to the whole area of the Tobin tax. The Tobin tax was an idea suggested by Professor James Tobin who passed away about four or five weeks ago. He suggested a very small tax on the trade of currency in the world. Today in the world we have about \$1.5 trillion to \$2 trillion a day of currency being traded and exchanged. About 90% of the currency trading that is going on is strictly for speculation and mostly done by the large investment banks.

What Professor Tobin had suggested was a very small tax of 0.1%, 0.2%, 0.25% which would slow down some of the speculation in currency that creates havoc in currency around the world. It was done with the Mexican peso and the Japanese yen and many other currencies of the world over the years.

As these investment banks play around with people's currencies they in effect play around with people's lives, throw people out of work and cause all kinds of poverty and despair in the world.

If we had some kind of small international tax it would not affect the ordinary people of this country at all. We could have an exemption on that of \$10,000, \$20,000, \$50,000 or whatever we wanted. If we had a tax of 0.1% it would only be \$1 out of \$1,000. We would slow down some of the speculation and create a bit more order in the financial markets.

A consequence of this kind of tax would be to create a huge international development fund of several hundred billion dollars to fight world poverty, the AIDS pandemic in Africa and to do environmental cleanups. A lot of that money could go back to the countries that collected the tax to help pay for health care, social services and the fight against cigarettes and smoking that I referred to earlier in my comments.

*Government Orders*

Three years ago in March I had the honour to introduce a motion in the House of Commons asking parliament to endorse the principle of the Tobin tax or the tax on the speculation of currency in concert with the world community. It passed in the House of Commons by a vote of 164 to 83. We became the first parliament in the world to endorse the idea of a Tobin tax. We had people from all five political parties who actually supported the bill.

• (1115)

Since then we have seen a lot of movement in different parts of the world. The French have actually introduced legislation to participate in a Tobin tax or a currency tax regime once we reach a critical mass in the world community to make this tax effective. Studies are now going on in the European community. The idea of the Tobin tax is being endorsed by many different countries and politicians around the world. There is a growing movement for a global approach toward taxation.

We now have trade deals that are basically charters of rights for international co-operation or charters of rights for investment in the globalized world. These are now very lopsided. What we need is an international global vision where we also would have some rights for the ordinary people in terms of international labour and social standards and goals and objectives, environmental standards and financial institutions that would have the ability and the power to levy a tax against the speculation of currency.

That is the kind of international vision that I think more and more people are supporting, certainly the churches, many of the NGOs and many of the people who live in various parts of the world.

These are some of the things that I believe we should do. We need this new international vision, a new and a modern day global plan to develop many parts of the world that are today suffering from hunger and famine.

Sadly speaking, hundreds and hundreds of people have died of starvation in the last 15 minutes. I think about 20,000 people a day in the world die of starvation. Every hour of the day, hundreds and hundreds of people die of starvation, yet we have this great disparity of wealth around the world. We have the ability through a currency speculation tax to build up an international fund where people of the world could be fed, where there could be the development of agriculture, food production and processing around the world. The technology is there to feed the people of the world, to develop the world and to clean up the environment. We have those abilities. What we lack is the vision and the political will to make it happen.

When we debate a bill like Bill C-47, when we support a bill like Bill C-47, which I do, which I certainly do, we should also look at other parts of taxation such as the unfairness of the levy of employment insurance, the EI fund, which is sitting now with a \$43 billion surplus of ordinary people's money. All the time fewer people qualify from the fund. Some 64% of the people who now do not qualified for the fund earn less than \$20,000 a year, yet they have to pay premiums.

We should be looking at the unfairness of the airport security tax, this new GST that has been imposed on us and that the government now is using as a tax grab on ordinary citizens. We should look at some new vision in the future in terms of international stability and

funding of international programs. The idea here, which is getting momentum around the world, is that of a small tax on the speculation of currency which is causing havoc in so many countries of the world.

• (1120)

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member and was quite interested in the fact that he spent quite a bit of time talking about the airport tax which of course is not in this bill. It was in a previous bill. The hon. member raises some important points with respect to taxation.

In pretty well every speech the member talks about the Tobin tax. I do not know whether he has thought through the idea of having a money movement transaction tax that would siphon billions of dollars out of the economy and put it into the hands of the government or the governments of the world to redistribute as they want.

Is the member really convinced philosophically that that is the way to solve the problems of poor people? Would it not be a lot better if instead we had entrepreneurs go into these areas, start up businesses, manufacturing plants and other things, give these people an education, help them to work in the knowledge industry or whatever and have them develop jobs instead of perpetuating the idea of a government taking money away from those who earn it and giving it to those for simple survival?

I would like to do so much more than just provide for survival for these people. His Tobin tax idea is really very short sighted. I would like him to comment on that.

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom:** Mr. Speaker, I also want to do more in terms of international development. I want to make sure we have industries in all parts of the world including the developing world. I want people to have well paying jobs, security, food and agricultural development. It is all part of the vision of a new global society.

However we need to fund it in some way. One way is through a tax on international currency. It is not a radical idea. In Canada we have taxes that are based on the ability to pay. We have a progressive tax system. It is not as progressive as I want it to be but it is a progressive system. We have redistribution of income through the taxation system. We have transfers to people in terms of old age pensions. We have transfers to provinces to provide equal access to health care with national standards. We have transfers to the so-called have not provinces in terms of equalization payments. Equalization is enshrined in the constitution.

[*Translation*]

Equalization is enshrined in the Canadian constitution. It is a good Canadian principle.

• (1125)

[*English*]

We have all these things to try to provide equality of condition and equality of opportunity. We should start applying the same philosophy internationally. The question is how to pay for it.

There may be other ways of paying for it. We could impose other kinds of levies to pay for international development. One of the fairest ways is a small tax on the speculation of currency. It would not affect ordinary people. It would affect some of the huge investment banks and money traders. Some 90% of the money traded during the day is for international speculation.

I have spoken about the issue at conferences around the world. I have spoken about it in Brussels, London, Brazil, at the United Nations and at other conferences. The idea is gaining momentum around the world. The European community is doing a major study on the idea of a tax on currency speculation. France has passed legislation on the issue. Belgium is close to passing legislation.

Most currency trading in the world is done in seven huge centres like London, New York, Frankfurt and three or four others. We need a critical mass to make the idea effective. I hope the hon. member will take a second look at it. Members of his party voted in favour of such a motion in March 1999.

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, I have a quick question for the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle for whom I have a great deal of respect as a colleague on the House of Commons finance committee.

First, he ought to clarify that the Tobin tax has nothing to do with former industry minister Brian Tobin. We are all aware of that individual's capacity to promote himself. We do not want him taking credit for the idea. The support garnered for the Tobin tax by the Minister of Finance about a year ago when he supported the government's—

**An hon. member:** Three years ago.

**Mr. Scott Brison:** It was three years ago. Time flies when we are having fun.

It was quite enlightening. I think the finance minister supported the Tobin tax at the time was because he thought it was a Tobin attack. He did not realize it was a tax. Perhaps he thought it was an attack on Tobin as opposed to a Tobin tax.

Second, there is a fundamental flaw with the proposed Tobin tax. It is a tiny tax that would apply to all currency traded. It requires speculation for a floating exchange rate mechanism to work. Not all speculation is bad. If we did not have some level of speculation we would not be able to have individual floating exchange rates at all.

The margins on the good kind of speculation on which we depend are so tiny that applying a tax to it would have a significantly negative impact, particularly on currencies like Canada's which have become increasingly marginalized as the U.S. dollar and the Euro have become more important.

The margins on the kind of negative speculation the hon. member would like to reduce are so great that a tiny tax would not reduce the incentive to pursue such speculation. It would reduce the incentive for the good kind of speculation on which we depend. I would appreciate the hon. member's feedback on that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Respectfully, this will go under the category "to be continued".

*S. O. 31*

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 11.30 a.m., pursuant to order made on Monday, April 8, the sitting is suspended until 2 p.m. this afternoon.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11.30 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 2.03 p.m.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[*English*]

### HARRY MACLAUHLAN

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, all Prince Edward Islanders mourn the loss of one of our most honoured sons, Harry MacLauchlan, who passed away on March 28.

Harry was a driving force in the economy, being the inspiration and founder behind many leading island businesses. Hundreds of islanders have worked for his companies over the years and they were always treated with respect and dignity, often approached with his trademark line "It's a great day".

His business efforts were honoured by his induction into the Business Hall of Fame, but Harry was much more than a businessman. He was committed to the island community through volunteer work, the Queen Elizabeth hospital foundation, amateur sports and recreation, and tourism initiatives.

His love of his family was evident always. Harry MacLauchlan personified all that is best in people: generosity, hard work, and deep affection for the well-being of others. His life's work is over but his legacy will continue.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### VIMY RIDGE

**Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin my presentation, I would like to welcome the French students from Wawota, which is in my riding, who are here today.

[*English*]

This is a day of remembrance. Not only is this the day we say goodbye to the Queen Mum, but also we remember the battle of Vimy Ridge 85 years ago. From today on, April 9, 2002, will have a dual memory in Canadian history.

The great white monument at the site of Vimy Ridge that stretches high into the sky is probably the most Canadian sight in the world. In today's world of travel people from all countries recognize that great memorial, and we honour today and indeed every day perhaps the greatest event in all our military history.

Let us not break faith with those who gave their lives for freedom and democracy.

*S. O. 31*

•(1405)

### VIMY RIDGE

**Mr. Carmen Provenzano (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today we commemorate the 85th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge. One of Canada's most famous military engagements, Vimy has become synonymous with sacrifice and heroism. Today we pause and remember the brave acts of those Canadian soldiers who 85 years ago made history when they gained control of Vimy Ridge and captured more ground, prisoners and guns than any previous British offensive.

The battle of Vimy Ridge was a major step toward the end of World War I. It earned Canada its own place at the armistice table and helped define us as a nation. Today we remember all those who fought and all those who gave their lives at Vimy Ridge for that nationhood. Indeed, it came at a high price. Three days of battle resulted in over 10,000 Canadian casualties and 3,598 soldiers never returned home.

Vimy Ridge occupies an important place in our history and in our hearts. Today gives us the opportunity to reflect on the bravery and sacrifice of those Canadian soldiers at Vimy Ridge 85 years ago today.

\* \* \*

### VIMY RIDGE

**Mr. Bryon Wilfert (Oak Ridges, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today marks the 85th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge, one of the greatest battles in Canadian history. Vimy Ridge proved to be a turning point in the Great War. Canadians were an important part of the epic battle. They fought exceptionally and were awarded four Victoria Crosses for that single battle, the country's highest award for bravery. The entire Canadian contingent was commended as being an elite fighting corps, and it has been said that Canada became a nation on the battlefields of Vimy Ridge.

As a tribute to this historic event the Royal Canadian Mint has announced the official unveiling of the new Vimy Ridge commemorative coin. The new five cent coin was introduced during a ceremony earlier today hosted jointly by the Royal Canadian Mint and Veterans Affairs Canada.

The Canadians at Vimy Ridge demonstrated our character at its best and reminded us of the strength of our proud heritage and what is possible for human beings to endure. For the courage and bravery the veterans have shown, Canadians nationwide sincerely thank them.

\* \* \*

### VIMY RIDGE

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on this day we honour the life of the Queen Mother and pay special tribute to the Canadians who fought in the famous battle of Vimy Ridge. The then commander of the 28th battalion, Alexander Ross, delivered the now famous words:

It was Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific on parade. I thought then that in those few minutes I witnessed the birth of a nation.

Eighty-five years ago on April 9, 1917, for the first time all four divisions of the Canadian Corps attacked the German held Vimy Ridge under a unified Canadian command led by Lieutenant General Sir Julian Byng. During the previous 3 years, 200,000 British and French soldiers had died in failed attempts to take the ridge. Through meticulous planning and extraordinary execution the Canadian Corps were able to take the ridge, but not without great cost. There were over 10,000 Canadian casualties, nearly 4,000 of them fatal.

The Canadian victory at Vimy is considered a turning point in the first world war and won Canada a separate signature on the treaty of Versailles. Vimy marked the first time Canadian soldiers fought shoulder to shoulder as Canadians.

\* \* \*

### VIMY RIDGE

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, today marks the 85th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge. The true significance of that battle lies in its contribution to our evolution from colony to nation.

Canada has a cherished military history, one that our country is in danger of losing. What would Major General Arthur Currie, the senior Canadian officer at Vimy, have to say about the government's treatment of our military that disgraces the memory of all those brave soldiers who fought and died on our behalf?

Canadians paid a terrible price to establish our independence on the battlefield and the right to be a nation. History will repeat itself and that spilled blood will have been in vain if the government carries out its interoperability plan to once again surrender the overall control of the Canadian military to foreign commanders. Canadian sovereignty depends on a strong, well equipped military that can pay its own way to the next world conflict.

If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

\* \* \*

•(1410)

[*Translation*]

### SAKU KOIVU

**Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this evening in Montreal the presence of a young player on the Montreal Canadiens line-up will be an inspiration and reassurance to many, not because of any goals he might score, but because of his personal victory over illness.

Not that long ago, the professional career of Saku Koivu seemed to be in jeopardy, and his life expectancy shortened. Now, however, after a determined battle, supported and encouraged by many, this player is back with us, with a clear message: there is hope.

Saku Koivu's return this evening is a happy event, not just for all hockey fans, but for all those affected by this terrible disease.

I hope the day will come when I will have the opportunity to applaud my son for all the goals he has scored, and to tell him that, at last, he no longer has tumours on his optic nerves.

Thank you, Saku Koivu, for showing us that, with hope and courage, the most important goal of life can be scored.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### CULTURE LINK

**Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I congratulate the recipients of the Toronto's Commitment to Diverse-City Award 2002 recipients announced on March 19 by Culture Link. Culture Link is a non-profit community based organization located in my riding that facilitates the settlement of newcomers to Toronto.

I congratulate Supporting Our Youth, recipient of the award in the youth category; Ezat Mossallanejad, recipient of the award in the newcomer settlement sector category; Tim McCaskell, recipient of the award in the general community category; and George Brown College, recipient of the award in the institutional or commercial category.

I again congratulate all the winners and Culture Link for their continued commitment to nurture a healthy understanding and appreciation of the rich diversities of our many local communities.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### CANADIAN SPORTS AWARDS

**Ms. Hélène Scherrer (Louis-Hébert, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate all of the winners and those who were nominated for the Canadian Sports Awards, held in Toronto on March 26.

They include Mark Oldershaw for canoeing and Marie-Ève Drolet for speed skating, who were chosen as the best junior athletes. Ashley Cowan, who swam 20 kilometres across Lake Erie in 20 hours and 14 minutes, received the Spirit of Sport Story of the Year award. Roland Green, MTB World Cup champion in 2001, was named Male Athlete of the Year and Catriona LeMay Doan took home the title of Female Athlete of the Year.

I would also like to pay tribute to all the other athletes, coaches and volunteers who were recognized with nominations. To close, I would like to say that it was no surprise—but a true pleasure—to watch our ambassadors, David Pelletier and Jamie Salé receive the Pair of the Year award following their marvelous recent performance.

I ask you all to join me in congratulating our champions and volunteers for their commitment to sport and to thank them for making Canada so proud.

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[English]

#### VIMY RIDGE

**Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton Centre-East, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, today the stark majestic white spires of

*S. O. 31*

Vimy, bathed by sunshine and wafted by a gentle breeze, belie the terror of old.

When shells burst all round and brave men died Canadians moved forth in a hell of man's own making, testing their mettle and mortality of soul. One hundred thousand were advancing on unconquerable Vimy. Canada's finest young men won the contest that day, a victory for all the world to see.

The greatest victory of World War I, Vimy Ridge would enter Canadian history on April 12, 1917. Many would say that Canada took birth that day, born into the world of nations with respect, born by the blood of our young, born through their determination, skill and daring. Their spirit lives on with us today.

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#### HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Mr. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today we commemorate the 85th anniversary of the bravery of Canadians at Vimy Ridge. It is also international Holocaust Remembrance Day where Jews in concert with our fellow citizens remember the worst genocide of the 20th century, crimes too terrible to be believed but not too terrible to have happened.

It was a genocidal anti-Semitism where, as Elie Wiesel put it, "not all victims were Jews but all Jews were victims". The murdered 6 million Jews and 11 million non-Jews were not just an abstraction, a statistic, but unto each person there was a name, there was an identity. Each person was a universe.

As scholars of the Holocaust recently warned, we once again see an eliminationist anti-Semitism rearing its ugly head. As the supreme court reminded us, the Holocaust did not begin in the gas chambers. It began with words.

We trust that the legacy of Holocaust Remembrance Day, of never again, of justice for all, will be the universal testament and legacy for all peoples everywhere.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

#### HEALTH

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express our concern and outrage that the lives of Canadians are being put needlessly at risk because of the government's failure to take the lessons of our tainted blood scandal and apply them to our organ and tissue system.

The *Fifth Estate* has documented a lucrative international trade in body parts taking place right under Health Canada's nose on which it has chosen not to act. Body parts are allegedly being obtained in Canada for sale. Hazardous unregulated tissues are being harvested abroad and sold here for profit. Already Canadians have died from CJD contaminated brain tissue transplants. Instead of taking a proactive, precautionary approach the government has dumped its responsibilities onto the shoulders of individual physicians.

### Oral Questions

Canadians want to give organs and tissues to save lives. Yet Health Canada's irresponsible approach may discourage donors. We call on the government to act now to guarantee donors that their gifts are protected and guarantee recipients that they are receiving organs and tissues regulated by the highest standards of safety.

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[Translation]

#### MINISTER OF CANADIAN HERITAGE

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on March 20, at the opening of the Salon du livre de l'Outaouais, the Minister of Canadian Heritage made inappropriate comments regarding the chair of the book fair, Estelle Desfossés. She reproached Ms. Desfossés for not including Franco-Ontarian writers enough at the fair, and what is more, she reproached her for being sympathetic to the PQ and BQ causes.

For the minister's information, Franco-Ontarians are quite involved in the book fair, not only as members of the board, but also as exhibitors and honoured guests. This is proof that the minister does not know what she is talking about and is playing cheap and petty politics.

How can she continue to boast that we live in one of the most tolerant countries in the world? How can she attack these many volunteers by demanding that they remain silent and especially refrain from taking any type of stance?

The minister of heritage owes an apology to the chairperson and to all of the members of the board of directors of the Salon du livre de l'Outaouais for her inappropriate comments.

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#### DENYSE BEAUDRY-LEDUC

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, recently, the great water colourist from Sainte-Dorothée, Denyse Beaudry-Leduc, showed a large number of her paintings at the Galerie Georges Darvill in Paris.

Ms. Beaudry-Leduc also represented Canada at the biennial in Florence, Italy, a large event at which over 600 professional artists representing 52 countries showed their work.

Marcel Barbeau and Denyse Beaudry-Leduc won the prestigious Lorenzo il Magnifico award at the Biennale Internazionale Dell'Arte Contemporanea. Ms. Beaudry-Leduc is the first Canadian to win this award.

I join with the inhabitants of Laval in congratulating this highly talented woman and wishing her many more years of success in the exercise of her art.

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[English]

#### FISHERIES

**Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, the 200 mile limit gave Canada the right to impose and enforce fisheries conservation measures within that zone. Fish stocks, however, range over the entire continental shelf.

The Flemish Cap and the nose and tail of the Grand Banks are outside the 200 mile limit, and this is a loophole that allows many NAFO countries to overfish with impunity in these areas. Canada can report overfishing outside the limit but is dependent on other NAFO countries to enforce NAFO conservation rules, which they rarely do.

The many devastated coastal communities in Newfoundland and Labrador and the maritimes know all too well the results of overfishing. Canada has a moral obligation to preserve the fish stocks of the North Atlantic as a vital world food resource.

I therefore call upon the Government of Canada to unilaterally declare custodial fisheries management of our continental shelf outside the 200 mile limit.

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[Translation]

#### PASSING OF THE QUEEN MOTHER

**The Speaker:** Order, please. As today is a day of national mourning, I would ask that hon. members rise for a minute of silence in honour of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

[Editor's Note: The House stood in silence]

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● (1420)

[English]

#### PRESENCE IN GALLERY

**The Speaker:** I wish to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Wolfgang Thierse, President of the Bundestag of the Federal Republic of Germany.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

#### MIDDLE EAST

**Mr. John Reynolds (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it is still not clear that the government is doing anything sensible to bring peace and security to the Middle East. It is clear that Syria and Iraq are in fact stirring up as much trouble as they can, either inside or near Israel and the Palestinian authority, to suit their own needs. If these two troublemaker regimes were brought to heel, both the Palestinians and Israelis would be safer.

Could the Minister of Foreign Affairs explain why Canada has not put any pressure on Syria or Iraq to back away from supporting organizations or others who are waging a war of terror in this region?

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member and the House that the government has been in regular contact with all governments in the Middle East and is urging restraint on all governments.

*Oral Questions*

We are perfectly aware that this violent conflict has the possibility of spinning out into other areas. We agree with all members of the House that we as Canadians must do our part to make sure that it does not. That is why we urge respect of the security council resolution to cease the hostilities, cease the fighting and bring the parties back to the bargaining table.

**Mr. John Reynolds (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, we realize the government can only do so much, but it would appear to Canadians that it is doing very little or is sitting idly by.

The crisis may soon be hitting Canadians in the pocketbook if Iraq decides to stop the flow of oil in support of the Palestinian side in this crisis. Could the Deputy Prime Minister explain what, if anything, Canada is doing to ensure that this crisis does not stop the flow of oil?

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to note that Canada's continued and persistent role has been to urge that parties respect United Nations resolutions. That is the case certainly with respect to Iraq.

We have also continued to urge all the parties that are involved in conflict that it is time now for a ceasefire. The recognition of the calamity that has been suffered by both Israelis and the Palestinian people demands that we should now have a ceasefire and the opportunity to review the causes of conflict to find the solution that leads to peace.

**Mr. John Reynolds (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** That sure answered that question, did it not, Mr. Speaker?

Yesterday we asked if Canada was supporting President Bush's efforts to have the Israelis withdraw from the territories. President Bush has also demanded at the same time that Yasser Arafat denounce terrorism as a tactic.

Canada has some clout with Arafat and the Palestinian authority. I would ask the foreign affairs minister to tell Canadians if we are using any of that clout to persuade Chairman Arafat to denounce terrorism as President Bush has requested.

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the hon. member, but he has been here in the House and has heard the answers that the government has consistently given on this question. We have consistently stated to Chairman Arafat that all violence has to stop, that they must cease encouraging violence. We have been consistent with that. We spoke to the speaker of the Palestinian authority when he was visiting the House and gave him that message.

I have passed on that message to my counterparts in the Middle East. We have consistently said to stop the terrorism, that it is not getting them anywhere and that they also must do their best to stop the violence. I assure the member that we will continue—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it is wrong that the government is allowing Hezbollah to raise money in Canada. Yesterday the Minister of Foreign Affairs stated:

There is a dimension of Hezbollah that actually has representatives elected to the Lebanese House...We will continue to work with all parties with whom we can get peace. We will continue to do that.

Is the minister saying that because Hezbollah has members in the Lebanese parliament and does some charity work that it is therefore not a terrorist organization and its fundraising operations should not be banned in Canada?

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think we have made it clear. This question has been asked before in the House. It is very clear that Hezbollah's military arm and any activities that it is conducting in Canada which have anything whatsoever to do with raising money for military activities are totally banned and repressed by the government.

There are, however, activities by Hezbollah which are of a social nature, and there are 12 members of the Lebanese legislature elected by Hezbollah to the legislature, and we are not going to declare them terrorists and stop dialogue with them in our efforts to get peace.

•(1425)

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, these are very fine lines. Let us be clear on who we are talking about. In 1983, Hezbollah blew up the U.S. marine and French army barracks in Beirut. It blew up the U.S. embassy annex in Beirut in 1984. It attacked the Israeli embassy in Lebanon in 1992. It continues to attack Israeli settlements.

Canada claims to be standing shoulder to shoulder with the United States in the war on terrorism. The United States has banned fundraising by all branches of Hezbollah. Why has Canada only banned the military wing?

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are also standing side by side with our colleagues in the United Kingdom who have adopted exactly the same stance that we have. The members of the United Kingdom are aware from the Irish experience that there is a difference between Sinn Fein and the IRA and that if we want peace we must deal with those who have a political dialogue. That is what we want. We do not want to just point fingers. We want peace. That is what we do in all our policies.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the situation in the Middle East is getting worse with every passing day, and the government should realize that, given this escalation in violence, the time for platitudes is over.

In order to get the peace process back on track and prevent the conflict from spreading throughout the region, Canada must be responsible, take a creative approach, as it successfully did in working to get anti-personnel landmines banned.

To keep the international community from contributing to a worsening of the conflict, will Canada try to convince arms producing countries to cease their exports to the Middle East?

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have always communicated the message to countries such as Iran, that arms shipments to Palestinians in these circumstances are not helpful. So, we are on the same wavelength as the member.

*Oral Questions*

There are legitimate arms sales around the world, but we are asking everyone involved to show restraint and not prevent peace in the region. This has always formed the basis of our policy.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, when I spoke of preventing arms exports to the Middle East, I meant all countries, not just shipments from Iran to Palestinians, but all countries, including exports from western countries to Israel and Arab countries.

Will Canada consider proposing an embargo on arms exports to all countries in the Middle East?

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is doing everything needed and everything possible to call for restraint in the Middle East.

We ourselves cannot impose an arms embargo. We have our own embargo that we are enforcing. It is our actions that count when it comes to others, not talk.

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge, in 2000, Canada shipped \$1 million worth of arms to Israel.

Yesterday, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said it would be premature to send an interposition force to the Middle East, because the parties to the conflict are not prepared to accept such a force.

In the search for solutions—and we are on the same wavelength on this issue—could the minister promote the holding of an international conference under the aegis of the United Nations, which would be attended by Israel, the Palestinian authority, the European Union, the United States, Russia and the leading countries of the Arab world?

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this evening, during a debate in the House, we will have the opportunity to look at all sorts of options such as the one proposed by the hon. member for Mercier.

For the time being, we must conclude that the participants to the conflict would have to agree to an international conference. We must first persuade the Palestinians and the Israelis to accept such a conference, and we will do our best.

I am telling the hon. member that we must try to be realistic and that we must focus on ending the violence by Israelis and Palestinians.

• (1430)

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, for the violence to end, there must be hope for a solution, and this is why we must find possible solutions.

The Bloc Québécois has already suggested sending an interposition force, imposing an embargo on the provision of weapons and the holding of an international conference. If none of these possible solutions is agreeable to the minister, can he tell us what he proposes to do?

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I propose that we continue our efforts, particularly with the United States, to put an end to violence. Then we could look at all sorts of options, including humanitarian assistance and the sending of troops from other countries. However, for that type of action to be

realistic and to have a chance of succeeding, it must be accepted by the parties involved.

This is what we are focusing on right now. Our government is working relentlessly to promote conditions that will lead to peace.

[English]

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I too would like to question the foreign affairs minister. Canadians are beginning to wonder whether the government is committed to doing anything concrete to advance peace in the Middle East.

As part of creating the conditions for peace, both sides deserve to know what specific help members of the international community are ready to offer.

My question is this: Will the government state clearly today its readiness to commit troops when it is appropriate as part of a peacekeeping effort in the Middle East?

**Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think as the foreign affairs minister has indicated, it is premature, but if there comes a circumstance where that is appropriate I think the Prime Minister and others in this government have said in the past that of course Canada would look at that matter very carefully, but it is a premature question at this point in time.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would again like to direct my question to the foreign affairs minister, whose favourite response to questions about what this government is prepared to do to advance peace in the Middle East is to say that Canada supports the U.S. position. Today Secretary of State Colin Powell has stated that the United States is prepared to put U.S. observers on the ground as part of a truce settlement.

Will the foreign affairs minister publicly state today that we will at the very least commit to sending Canadians to join an international team of observers, a monitoring team, in the Middle East?

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question, but this government has consistently stated that if the time becomes opportune and if the parties are willing to accept it, we are prepared to participate in putting monitors in place to help move the peace process. We are willing to consider all possibilities, but as I said yesterday when asked, it is premature at this particular time because the parties themselves are not in that position.

We would certainly support, and I have said publicly that we are supporting, the efforts of Mr. Powell. I am confident that our European allies also will support that. We would definitely look at putting monitors in place when the time is appropriate and it is possible.

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**FISHERIES**

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, overfishing in the Grand Banks is ruining communities in Atlantic Canada. In the past year the amount of fish taken illegally by foreign nations would have kept open fish plants in Trepassey, Burgeo, Canso and other fishing communities.

*Oral Questions*

We need a moratorium with teeth. We need major fishing states on side, including Russia. The place to start is at the G-8 environment ministers meeting this week in Banff. Will the Minister of the Environment present a new Canadian proposal for an enforcement system that works or will he continue to sit back while Canada's fragile fish stocks are taken by foreign countries? What will he propose at Banff?

**Hon. Robert Thibault (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is the feeling of the Government of Canada that working through NAFO is our best chance for managing the stocks on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks as well as the Flemish Cap. We recognize that there have been problems in the last year, but there are many less problems than there were in 1995 before we started actions at that time.

I will be meeting with ministers from European countries asking for their support at the annual meeting of NAFO. We will protect Canadian fish stocks.

• (1435)

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC/DR):** And, Mr. Speaker, more fish plants close.

This do nothing government is still offering no hope to the forest communities devastated by the government's failure to stop punitive American duties on softwood.

In Atlantic Canada fishing communities are being devastated by foreign overfishing and a moratorium that does not work. Is the government going to abandon Atlantic Canada's fishing communities too or will the Prime Minister announce a comprehensive policy to be endorsed at the G-8 summit that will cause our allies to obey the law and stop savaging Canada's fish stocks?

**Hon. Robert Thibault (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government will not take a sensationalist approach. It will not try to scare the people. It will not grandstand. It will take a reasoned, balanced approach.

The government will do what is good for fish, not like the previous government where decisions were taken for political purposes and ruined our fishery.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Macleod.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**The Speaker:** Order. I realize the hon. member for Macleod is a popular member, but we have to hear his question.

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**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure I will be so popular in a second.

The Liberals have a double standard. For the military we have 40 year old helicopters with replacements only planned. For the Prime Minister it took a weekend to get him brand new VIP executive helicopters. For the military there is a process, public tendering. For our Prime Minister no public tendering.

I want to know, how do they explain this double standard for our military?

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have said this before. I think the surprising thing is that the opposition party does not ask us why the Canadian Prime Minister does not always fly everywhere he goes in a Canadian built aircraft. Does the member think the president of France flies in a Boeing? Does he think the president of the United States flies in an Airbus?

Of course the Prime Minister of Canada will fly in a plane made by Canadians.

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, here is the problem with the logic behind that question: The four executive jets that the Prime Minister has today are Bombardier jets made in Canada. Explain this to me: Why then is he replacing good executive jets that have no problem with \$101 million brand new ones from the same Canadian company?

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, because nobody else makes jets in Canada.

Perhaps the member has not travelled with any ministers on these planes. Some of his colleagues have. Perhaps he was not there when the Prime Minister's plane was depressurized over Sweden last year and had to land in emergency circumstances.

Perhaps he has never travelled to Europe and he does not realize that the existing planes cannot fly all the way from Canada to Europe and that the new planes will be able to make that trip non-stop. Perhaps he does not believe that Canadian leaders ought to fly in the best Canadian product available.

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[*Translation*]

**SOFTWOOD LUMBER**

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Baie-Comeau, representatives of labour and the lumber industry indicated to us that they felt they had been tricked by the Minister for International Trade. Having shown solidarity with his strategy, they now find themselves left to their own devices to cope with the 29% tariffs imposed by the Americans. Some fear for their companies and their jobs.

Does the minister realize that solidarity is not one-way, and that an assistance plan for the industry and its workers is necessary in the softwood lumber sector, as the Bloc Quebecois has proposed?

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian industry, and the industry all over Quebec, has worked closely with our government. The Quebec government itself has worked closely with us. We are going to continue to maintain this dialogue.

*Oral Questions*

The opposition may claim that some people feel they have been tricked. I can assure the House of one thing: the industry, the workers and the communities know that this government intends to work in solidarity with them and to solve the softwood lumber problem, not by getting down on our knees as some would propose, but by winning our case in this very important matter.

• (1440)

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, what we want now is not intentions but actions.

This past February 21 in the House, the parliamentary secretary to the minister spoke of an action plan, and we are still waiting for it. The unions reminded the minister of this, moreover, when he was in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean.

By doing nothing, as he is now, the minister is giving Canada and the United States the impression that he does not want to fight to the end to obtain unhampered access to the U.S. for our softwood lumber.

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can offer the assurance that our government will work with the affected workers and communities.

We have a large number of available programs. We know that several are also in the hands of the provincial government, assistance to workers in particular.

As hon. members are aware, we have transferred close to \$600 million to the government of Quebec over the past year, through the manpower agreement, precisely so as to help workers in this economy and in this industry.

We are going to continue to work with a sense of responsibility that will help Canada.

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[English]

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister forgot to say that the chief of defence staff in a report in January said our current fleet of Challengers is perfectly safe. It does not need to be replaced. Yet the government has chosen to put the comfort and convenience of its ministers ahead of the safety of our soldiers. That is shameful.

Yesterday the defence minister said that the safety of our soldiers is important to him. After serving five years as minister he still has not required replacements for the 40 year old Sea Kings or the 35 year old Hercs. Why is it that after only two months the minister of public works can get brand new executive jets for the Prime Minister and the cabinet, but he is so weak in cabinet that he has not been able to get our soldiers the aircraft they—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of National Defence.

**Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the purchase of these Challengers affects in no way the purchase of Sea Kings. The money was provided by the government for the Sea Kings a long time ago, long before the Challengers. The procurement process is proceeding to replace them.

Meanwhile they are operating quite well because we have upgraded them. In fact some 23 countries, including the United States, continue to use Sea King helicopters. They can provide an efficient and effective service and they are.

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the procurement process is going so well that in fact it started two years before the Challengers were purchased 19 years ago. The Liberals have egos that are so big, maybe it would have been wise to buy larger planes, say C17s, so they could use them to carry their egos around.

Just last month the Prime Minister told our soldiers fighting in Afghanistan that they can rent planes to get around. Meanwhile he and his Liberal ministers will be flying around aboard these \$101 million twin flying Taj Mahals. Does the defence minister not think that this money could have been better spent—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

**Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is very disingenuous because repeatedly members of the opposition have travelled with ministers on board Challengers and they know the purpose that they serve.

This is the kind of thing they have done repeatedly. Now the Challenger aircraft are Taj Mahals. They are the people who turned over the keys to the limousine when their leader was first elected. They are the people who were going to turn Stornoway into a bingo hall. They are the people who were never going to take parliamentary pensions. I think they should put the hair shirt in the closet and leave it there.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

[Translation]

**The Speaker:** Order, please. It is impossible to hear the hon. member for Laurentides.

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**SOFTWOOD LUMBER**

**Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, forestry workers on Quebec's north shore are worried, and they are suffering from the lumber crisis. Not only are they the victims of that trade war, they are also suffering from the harsh restrictions imposed by this government on the employment insurance program.

In order to help Quebec forestry workers, should this government not consider very seriously the suggestions made by the Bloc Québécois to improve certain aspects of the employment insurance program and thus help workers make it through the softwood lumber crisis?

• (1445)

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I should tell the hon. member opposite that the employment insurance program is already in place to help workers who are laid off. The Council of Forest Industries was informed by the Department of Human Resources Development that the department is prepared to provide to the council the information it needs to support its members all across Canada.

*Oral Questions*

**Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we are talking about an urgent issue.

Could the government act quickly and effectively to support the workers who are the victims of the lumber dispute by increasing the level of benefits and by extending the period during which a laid off worker can collect benefits?

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to underline the fact that, as the hon. member is well aware, the employment insurance program can adjust to variations in local unemployment rates. As unemployment rates go up, eligibility criteria become less strict and benefit periods get longer.

I should also point out that 88% of wage earners would qualify for employment insurance benefits. The opposition is well aware of this and these measures have already been taken by the government to help workers.

[English]

**Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, both U.S. trade representative Robert Zoellick and Montana senator Max Baucus have attacked Canada on the softwood issue in the last week. Their letters and editorials are full of wildly inaccurate accusations.

Why has the government's response been silence?

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I believe that the very words of ambassador Zoellick and everyone else who has been talking was rapid reaction to the very strong words that the government has been saying on the softwood lumber issue.

I have been loud and clear in saying what I think of the punitive measures that the Americans are imposing on our communities and on our workers in softwood lumber. I have said what I thought of the national American trade laws, which I am very pleased will be negotiated in the next round of the WTO, because Canada has always said that those American trade laws were punitive and unfair.

**Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, Pollyanna again. The Leader of the Opposition has responded. The government has not.

Last summer the government planned a public relations campaign to get the correct information out to the American public on softwood. This was cancelled. Two weeks ago the minister reannounced this plan but we have seen nothing.

The minister has dropped the ball on Canada's most important trade issue. When is the minister going to pick it up and run with it?

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** First of all, Mr. Speaker, I think the member should enlighten us as to which opposition leader he is referring to exactly in his remarks because there are a number of them who pretend to be in that job right now.

However, I can say one thing. This morning I had a meeting with the premier of British Columbia, Gordon Campbell. We are continuing our work on that very important priority of ours.

I have said that the softwood lumber dispute with the United States has been my number one priority in the last year. It continues to be the number one priority for me and for this government.

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**FISHERIES**

**Mr. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has taken a strong position with respect to foreign overfishing outside Canada's 200 mile limit. We are aware of serious violations by vessels from Russia and the Faroe Islands.

Could the minister give us an update as to what specific steps he has taken to combat this serious abuse?

[Translation]

**Hon. Robert Thibault (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, I want to thank the hon. member for his excellent question.

[English]

First let me say that I am pleased with the action of the Russian government in suspending the licence of the *Olga* for violating NAFO fishing agreements.

However other member countries have been deliberately ignoring international conservation measures. The Government of Canada will not tolerate this. As a measure of our resolve, I have announced today that Canada is closing its port to fishing vessels from Estonia. Further, I intend to meet with my European counterparts in the coming months to seek support for Canada's position prior to NAFO meetings in September.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**RADIO-CANADA**

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Radio-Canada employees in eastern Canada have been locked out since March 25. Management of this crown corporation does not want to return to the bargaining table as long as employees refuse to go back to work with what they were offered.

Will the Minister of Canadian Heritage make a commitment to contact the president of Radio-Canada to convince him that the corporation should return to the bargaining table in good faith and conclude a collective agreement that respects workers' demands as well as the right of the francophone audience to programming services?

● (1450)

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the lockout has lasted two weeks, and I know that the francophone audience is really missing its programming.

I encourage both parties to resume productive negotiations immediately.

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a recent Decima poll shows that an overwhelming majority of Canadians support ratifying Kyoto. Even in Alberta there is support of over 65%.

Last week prominent business leaders like Robert Schad and Stephen Bronfman were campaigning to get the government to meet its commitment to Kyoto. The environment minister is still waffling. Even his fellow cabinet colleagues openly question the support.

The Canadian people want the Kyoto protocol. Business leaders want it. Why can we not just ratify it?

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member should know, the government's position is clear. We will have consultations with the Canadian public, with industry groups that are affected and with the provinces and territories on ratification and its potential impact on Canada. We will also devise a plan in consultation with those groups, which will not penalize any region of the country or any province. After we have done that, we will make our decision on ratification.

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, 54 post-deployment reports on the use of the Sea Kings mention at least one of the following: mission cancelled for aircraft maintenance; mission downgraded by aircraft's lack of serviceability; major snags that cause significant downtime; and aircraft that were grounded.

Why does the government not pull the flying carpet out from under the Prime Minister, cancel the \$100 million order for the flying Taj Mahals and buy new helicopters for our troops, or has the little guy from Shawinigan become the sultan of Shawinigan?

**Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are buying new helicopters. The government has entered into a procurement process.

I indicated that by the end of the year we will be able to announce the new helicopter that will replace the Sea Kings. Meanwhile, the Sea Kings have been given upgrades. They are operating quite effectively in the Arabian Sea in the Afghanistan campaign. They have an over 90% success rate in terms of their missions. Twenty-three countries are flying over 600 of them. They are very good aircraft.

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, the answer does not fly any better than the Sea Kings.

The Minister of National Defence says that the new luxury jets are an upgrade to make sure that the government is better able to do its job when it is required to travel. The only thing the cabinet does fast is fly.

Why is the minister not more concerned about providing his troops with the equipment they need to do their jobs than he is about providing the Prime Minister with a Canadian version of Air Force One to feed his imperial-sized ego?

**Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the replacement aircraft, the Challenger, is much the same model except that is an upgraded version. It has better avionics and better fuel efficiency. It can go to more airports. It can do non-stop trips which again will help the government to operate in a more efficient and effective fashion when it comes to travel.

\* \* \*

**LEADERSHIP CAMPAIGNS**

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Finance invoked the ethics counsellor's ruling when I asked about Calgary lawyer Jim Palmer, who was raising money for the minister's leadership campaign while working for the Department of Finance. That simply is not good enough.

Will the minister clear the air today by tabling a list of those who Mr. Palmer consulted on behalf of the Department of Finance and a list of firms and individuals who donated to the minister's leadership campaign?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this matter has been discussed extensively with the ethics counsellor. He has commented on it. Any further questions should be directed to him.

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, that is interesting. The ethics counsellor has no credibility with Canadians and none with the members of the House, except for those who hide behind his rulings.

The ethics counsellor has a perfect record of never having found anyone in breach of the so-called Liberal code of ethics. He is batting 1,000. However, if the minister is so confident in the ethics counsellor, will he table in its entirety Mr. Wilson's written ruling regarding the investigation into this murky relationship?

● (1455)

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the ethics counsellor has commented extensively publicly and has responded to questions on this matter and has not held anything back.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of the Environment said that the government's position on the ratification of the Kyoto protocol will be considered after the introduction of a plan which will be fair for all regions of the country.

But in July, after the Bonn meeting, the Prime Minister said that the government was prepared to ratify the Kyoto protocol in 2002.

It is now 2002. Will the minister confirm that Canada will ratify the Kyoto protocol this year?

*Oral Questions***EDUCATION**

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is the fourth month of the year. The Prime Minister has not changed his mind. So we are awaiting developments, especially after the joint federal-provincial committee, which will be submitting its report in a few weeks.

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, at the opening of the Conference of the Parties held in Marrakech in November 2001, the Minister of the Environment quoted the Prime Minister as saying “The Bonn accord paves the way for ratification of the Kyoto protocol by Canada next year”.

Does the minister realize that his statements contradict those of the Prime Minister and that he is getting in the way of the entire process of ratifying the Kyoto protocol this year?

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** No, Mr. Speaker, there is no contradiction. Last year, the Prime Minister clearly said that the Bonn and Marrakech accords pave the way for ratification, even for 2002.

[*English*]

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, federal officials are now estimating that the Kyoto protocol could cost Canadians as much as \$15 billion over the next five years. Last week it was \$10 billion; this week it is \$15 billion.

The minister is on a cross-country tour selling Kyoto but it is clear that the government really does not know what it will cost. Would the Minister of the Environment tell the House how much the Kyoto protocol will cost? Will it be \$40 billion or \$50 billion by the time he gets to Calgary?

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member who is a critic for the Alliance should know that the government's consistent position has been that no figures will be put forward from the government until we have had the report from the federal-provincial-territorial joint working group which is currently analyzing the impact of Kyoto on the economy.

When that occurs all governments, federal, provincial and territorial, will be in a better position to offer comments and a response to the hon. member's question.

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I wish the minister would have asked some of these questions before he signed in Kyoto. Canadians are growing tired of this chicken little forecast from the minister. Yet he continues his cross-country the sky is falling tour, trying to sell Kyoto even though he has no idea what it will cost.

It was this same cavalier attitude of spending that put Canada into the \$547 billion debt we are in. Will the government stop trying to rob future generations of Canadians and just admit that it made a mistake when it signed Kyoto?

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the hon. member remembers what he said at the Alliance convention not too long ago when he said that the Alliance position on Kyoto would “help our fundraising”.

**Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. In 1998 the federal government established the Canada study grants. Since then tuition fees, rental housing and capital costs for things like computers and books have risen.

Will the minister expand the Canada study grants to make extra funding available for students with the highest needs?

● (1500)

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to be able to answer the member's question. We are pleased to announce that we are expanding the Canada study grants which will provide better post-secondary access for those with disabilities, women in non-traditional doctoral studies, part time students and students with dependants.

[*Translation*]

In its most recent budget, our government announced investments of \$10 million for two measures which will help disabled students pay for the costs of their education. We will be increasing the Canada study grants now awarded to these students from \$5,000 to \$8,000, and there will be other improvements as well.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the farm safety net agreement between the provinces and the federal government expires next February. The minister has tried to impose the one size fits all program. Now backtracking at an Olympic speed, he is spending \$15 million on a series of poorly organized meetings with select farm groups. These so-called consultations are only an attempt to force acceptance of his plan.

Why can the agriculture minister find \$15 million for this public relations exercise but cannot find \$5 million for farm drought in Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, here is the critic for a party that says we should talk to the grassroots. We are spending some money to have the widest, broadest and most in-depth dialogue with farmers and all Canadians about the future direction of the agriculture and the agri-food industry in Canada.

We think it is the way to go. We want to talk to people. There is no done deal. We do not know all the answers. We do not know all the questions. That is why we want to talk to Canadians about it and work with everyone to do so.

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

**HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has once again told people on the south shore that money was available to go ahead with highway 30, which was promised by the Liberals during the election campaign.

What does the Minister of Finance have to say to the Mayor of Longueuil, Mr. Olivier, who is telling him in no uncertain terms to stop stating that the money is available and to pay up, because the Government of Quebec's share is on the table?

**Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have already explained, discussions have taken place with my counterpart, Mr. Ménard, regarding highway 30. As I have said publicly, this is a priority for the federal government. We will continue to work with the Government of Quebec to find a solution. Our party supports this highway.

\* \* \*

[English]

**FISHERIES**

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the real minister of the environment. Despite that the minister of fisheries says the issue of overfishing on the Atlantic coast will not be addressed at the summit in Banff, practically every country that fishes on that coast will be represented there.

Will the minister confirm that he will raise the issue of overfishing on the Atlantic coast? He will be negligent if he refuses to do so.

**Hon. Robert Thibault (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Environment is a past minister of fisheries and shares all our concerns for the fish off the nose and tail of the Grand Banks.

Like the rest of cabinet, the rest of government and hon. members of the House, he will not let an opportunity go by to promote proper management of our fishery resources.

\* \* \*

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Statistics Canada has released its latest analysis of employment and productivity.

Could the Minister of Finance explain to the House the importance of the most recent reports on the performance of the Canadian economy with the creation of almost 88,000 new jobs in March?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the question of the member for Brampton Centre is very much to the point. In terms of productivity on a year over year basis, Canada's productivity at 2% matched that of the United States for the first time in a long time but that is still not good enough. We have to do better than the Americans.

One area where we are doing better is in terms of job creation. In the first three months of this year over 170,000 new jobs were

created. That is the best job record since 1987. In the month of March alone at 88,000 jobs it is the best record since we started keeping records in Canada.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

• (1505)

[English]

**EXCISE ACT, 2001**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-47, an act respecting the taxation of spirits, wine and tobacco and the treatment of ships' stores, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I was in the process of answering a question posed of me by the finance critic in the Conservative Party about the Tobin tax, the tax on the speculation of currency.

I want to confirm to him that speculation on currency occurs on very small margins. A very small tax on the speculation of currency will sort out speculation around the world, which would be positive in terms of international development in the world community.

A tax on speculation would slow down speculation in the world on currency exchanges. Three years ago the House of Commons passed a motion agreeing that we should adopt the idea of the Tobin tax, a small tax that would slow down the speculation of currency and at the same time build up a huge international development fund. I am sure the finance critic of the Conservative Party, on giving it a second thought, would agree with my position.

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle regarding the Tobin tax. How would he propose that our floating exchange rate mechanisms would be able to work if we were to put a tax, a small tax albeit but still a tax, on currency speculation when the good kinds of speculation which we require to maintain a floating exchange rate mechanism have such minute, tiny margins? My difficulty with the Tobin tax is that it would not discourage the type of speculation that is focused on the hot money movements that lead to meltdowns. It would actually discourage the kind of good speculation which we need in order for countries like Canada to maintain an independent monetary policy. That is a real concern.

How would he propose that the Tobin tax would work when, if 200 countries agreed to it, all it would take is one country, 10 countries or 15 countries to not agree to it and all the money through electronic means would be transferred through accounts in those countries?

• (1510)

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom:** Mr. Speaker, I suppose I should let the member from Nova Scotia explain what is good and bad speculation, and what is big and small speculation. I am not sure if he can do that. It is a pretty arbitrary definition of speculation.

The member for Brandon—Souris would know the answer to that. I certainly could not help him there except to say that the vast body of opinion does not share the concern that he has. The vast body of opinion that is looking into this issue thinks that a very small tax would deter the bad speculation, the kind of speculation that wreaks havoc with the different currencies around the world.

We would need to have this tax to be an effective tax along with the co-operation of most of the major financial players in the world. There are only about seven or eight that are really major, such as the European Community, Britain, the United States and two or three others like Japan. This is a means of doing something to curb the speculation in the world, to curb the volatility of the currencies and also to help the international development fund.

**Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C-47. Based on the debate I heard from the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle and others we would not know it was Bill C-47 because they talked about the airport security tax, the Tobin tax and all these things. I will follow his lead and talk about something else myself.

Bill C-47 is a housekeeping bill that would do a lot of things to clean up the act as far as tax collection goes and to define things for people involved in the wine, spirits and tobacco industry. It would do a variety of things including increasing the tobacco tax by \$240 million annually, which will be the lead-in to the subject I want to talk about.

I feel obligated to mention a few things about Bill C-47. It would change the framework governing taxes on spirits, wine and tobacco. It would make the duty charged on wine the same as the duty currently charged on spirits.

The bill would bring in licensing registrations and regulations for the transportation industry to prevent trafficking and control of the movement of spirits and wine. It would create new provisions for offences for those breaking the law with regard to wine, spirits and tobacco.

The legislation would merge some already existing taxes which should make it simpler for industry to handle. It would make the federal tax on cigarettes the same all across the country which it should have been all along in any case.

I was watching television the other evening and I saw a Health Canada ad that said 45,000 Canadians die from smoking cigarettes every year. I thought to myself that figure could not be right. That is 10 times the number of people killed in the World Trade Center attack, and according to the ad it happens every year. I thought it must be wrong.

I contacted the Department of Health to clarify the figure and to ensure it was not providing the wrong information to Canadians. The department sent me a report confirming that in Canada 40,000 to 45,000 Canadians die of smoking related diseases. That is the same as having a World Trade Center attack every month. It is absolutely incredible. If we were to think about this, 45,000 Canadians die every year, year in and year out.

The report goes on to say that this impacts on the cost of living in our society of \$15 billion a year. It is \$2.5 billion directly to our

### *Government Orders*

health care system at a time when it is strained to its very edges, and yet we have this extra burden that does not have to be there.

The report from the Office of Tobacco Control, Health Protection Branch, stated:

According to this analysis, smokers cost society about \$15 billion while contributing roughly \$7.8 billion in taxes.

If it is killing 40,000 to 45,000 people a year it hardly seems like good value. A rough calculation indicates that at 41,000 people dying per year with a \$7.8 billion tax revenue, that amounts to \$190,000 per person. This is crazy. It is absolutely ridiculous that 45,000 people a year die from tobacco related diseases.

I commend and encourage the health minister to use these ads more that tell us about the dangers of smoking and about the incredible costs incurred. I encourage her to do more of these ads and make them clearer. I want her to point out the number of people who die every year in Canada is the same as 10 World Trade Center attacks. In the U.S. it extrapolated into an unbelievable number, but we are not talking about the U.S. we are talking about Canada.

The Canadian government, the military, everybody in Canada has turned a focus on the horrible terrorism act in New York which killed 4,000 people, but we have 45,000 people dying every year from smoking related diseases. It seems to me a misguided focus. If we are to address this issue the government has to come up with more ways to discourage people.

● (1515)

In the documents provided on Bill C-47 the government says it would increase the taxes on tobacco by \$240 million annually. It claims that this would discourage tobacco consumption. I do not think that \$240 million will discourage tobacco consumption enough. It does not provide educational material for young people, for smokers and does not help people get off the smoking habit. That is not nearly enough based on the numbers available and based on the study on the costs of smoking in Canada.

The numbers are absolutely incredible. They just go on and on in this report about the damage. It says that in 1991 approximately \$2.5 billion in health care costs was attributable to smoking. That was 4% of the total health care budget in Canada.

That is just the beginning. There are extra costs for hospitals, physicians and absenteeism, and all other costs attributed to the smoking habit, which in 1991 was estimated at \$15 billion. If we were to think about that, the whole health care budget was only \$66 billion and the smoking attributable costs were \$15 billion.

While we are talking about Bill C-47 and extra taxes on tobacco I raise the alarm bell and encourage the Minister of Health to increase those ads and put them into perspective for people so they can understand how dramatic the damage is that smoking is doing to our health, especially to young people, based on the charts and information that Health Canada supplied me. I hope we can raise the level of public awareness on this.

*Government Orders*

I compliment the Minister of Health for placing these ads. I have spoken to her today about how effective they were on me. In fact, they were so effective I thought they were wrong. The numbers are so high, they are hard to believe. I hope the Minister of Health will continue those ads, maybe even broaden them out and put them into perspective for people.

When I say that 45,000 people a year die in Canada people shake their heads and say that it is a lot. However, when I put it into perspective and say that it is 10 times the number of people that were killed in the World Trade Center they are flabbergasted. That is almost a World Trade Center catastrophe every month in Canada.

We should not accept this. We should not stand for it. We should do everything we can to bring this awful disease or addiction or whatever we want to call it to a minimum level at all costs because the real cost in money and in lives is incredible, especially at a time when much of the time we spend in the House is talking about health care.

Here we are spending \$3, \$4 or \$5 billion on health care costs which could be controlled or reduced. I hope we do that in this case. I want to say those numbers again. That is \$3 or \$4 billion in health care costs because of smoking related and smoking attributable ailments.

When the government is talking about raising an extra \$240 million in taxes as opposed to the cost directly attributable to our health care system of \$4 billion, it is incredible. We should all be aware of this and the government should be doing more to raise public awareness of the situation and push for a correction.

I will now go back to Bill C-47 which is what the bill is about, although the bill does mention tobacco. It has several clauses with respect to tobacco, tobacco controls and tobacco taxes. I would like to see much more of that restriction. I would like to see a more concentrated, focused and increased effort on controlling tobacco and helping people get off the tobacco addiction.

Does Bill C-47 have some positives? We think it does. Bill C-47 would merge taxes which already exist to make it simpler for businesses to handle. It would make the taxes on tobacco the same right across the country, which is what it should have been all along. It would change the form of penalties resulting from excise tax, and we support the move in that direction. The increase in the export duties should discourage smuggling Canadian cigarettes back into the country which has been a problem in the past although it is reduced now.

• (1520)

On the down side, Bill C-47 increases the taxes but again does not specify where the taxes will go. Will it go toward helping people to understand their addiction to tobacco and the terrific price it costs in human lives, sickness, dollars and the strain on our health care system? Will that be where the money goes or will it go into general revenue like the EI fund? It is absolutely wrong for the \$40 billion surplus in the EI fund to be going into general revenue. I consider that to be fraud. Every employee in Canada who gets a paycheque pays an EI premium but it is not an EI premium. It is an extra tax. If the government wants to take this money and put it into general revenue as a tax it should be marked extra Liberal tax, but it is not. It

should be designated as a Liberal tax and not an employment insurance premium.

I appreciate the chance to speak to Bill C-47. We will be supporting Bill C-47 but I do hope my comments have not fallen on deaf ears. I hope the Minister of Health understands that I appreciate what she has done in the direction of raising public awareness of the damage smoking does to health and the costs to our health care system but I hope she will enhance that. I hope she will put more money into that budget and maybe take some of this money and put it into a budget to increase public awareness and help people get off the addiction to tobacco.

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance):**

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to ask my colleague from Cumberland—Colchester to clarify his position. Am I to understand that he is in favour of raising the excise tax on tobacco products significantly above the level proposed in this bill? If so, to what level would he propose to raise it?

Does he base this on any scientific or empirical data about the correlation between tobacco use and prices? If so, I wonder if he could make reference to that because I have heard competing information. Some data suggests that while tobacco prices have increased over the past three decades so in fact has teen tobacco use. I wonder if he could comment on that.

Finally, would he not agree with me that if the government is to raise additional revenues through the excise tax on tobacco that these revenues should be offset through commensurate tax reductions in other areas?

**Mr. Bill Casey:** Mr. Speaker, somehow I could tell he was going to ask me a question by the way he was looking at me.

Increased tobacco taxes could be part of a strategy, but certainly not the only part of the strategy to discourage smoking especially among young people, to decrease the terrible cost to health and health care in Canada in actual dollars. It could be part of the strategy but it has to be a wide strategy of education, restrictions, maybe higher taxes and a variety of other things.

Much of the revenue from Bill C-47 could go toward preventing tobacco smoking and toward encouraging people to quit smoking. Should the revenues be offset by others? I do not think that is necessary at this time. I think the revenues should be dedicated to fighting tobacco addiction.

• (1525)

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on the question posed by my colleague concerning taxes on tobacco.

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One of the fears in raising tobacco taxes has to do with the problem we had the last time when taxes were at an all time high. The increase in black market sales became a significant problem in the provinces of Quebec and Ontario, and even in the west. The government's response to that was to reduce the taxes on tobacco so it could be sold at a reasonable price and then hopefully the government could then, as the hon. member said, look at directing those taxes into more meaningful programs. However the government did not do that.

I am curious to know what his response would be in the event of significantly increasing taxes on tobacco, especially if the black market continues to grow and people are still accessing tobacco through underground routes, something which I think is a significant problem.

**Mr. Bill Casey:** Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that was a tax problem. I believe that was a law enforcement problem. Just because the law enforcement systems in the country were not successful in enforcing the law does not mean the circumstances change. I think the system has been improved but I do not think it has been totally addressed.

The hon. member referred to selling tobacco at a reasonable level. I am not sure what a reasonable level is if tobacco sales generate 40,000 or 45,000 deaths per year even though it generates \$7.8 billion in taxes. I divided 41,000 deaths into \$7.8 billion and it came out to \$190,000 per person. For every person who dies the government generates \$190,000 in tobacco taxes. That is an awful way to generate tax revenue.

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to what the member for Cumberland—Colchester had to say. I also listened to the question and there clearly is a balance here.

I am pleased to see that taxes on tobacco products are rising in various jurisdiction in the United States. I think it helps us with the question which the member addressed before.

I wonder if the member would give us his thoughts on the other side of the question. Like him I am very concerned about it. I am involved with groups in my riding that are actively working to reduce tobacco consumption among young people. People often ask me why the government does not completely ban tobacco. I have some thoughts myself. I am in an area very close to tobacco growing and I sort of know the answer to my own question.

I wonder what the member's thoughts are on banning tobacco products all together.

**Mr. Bill Casey:** Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member for Peterborough were to bring in a petition to ban tobacco I think we could do it.

I am not a smoker and never have been so I cannot share the feeling of an addicted smoker. I do not know what is involved. I have to cough my words because it is not fair for me to say we should ban cigarettes and everybody should stop smoking. I know it takes a tremendous effort to stop smoking.

However, if the hon. member for Peterborough were to consider that according to the Department of Health numbers we have the equivalent of one World Trade Center disaster every month, year in

and year out, then there is a strong argument that we should take a lot of action to deal with it.

As a country, in partnership with other countries all around the world, we have taken strong action to fight terrorism which resulted in the 4,000 or 5,000 person deaths, the horrible tragedy and attack in New York City. Here we have one happening every month in our own country. I should not say that we make very little effort to do anything but I do think we should do more.

I do not know if banning tobacco is the answer. I would probably try to go in the direction the government has gone with some success but I would go further. I would put more pressure on the industry, provide more help for smokers, more information for young people and more ways to discourage people from smoking.

• (1530)

**Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I have grave concerns when it comes to taxation on any product. I find it rather strange that we want to talk about taxation instead of education. I think we are missing the boat here.

The government can tax cigarettes, tobacco and spirits all it wants but an underground market will be created. I think it is time the government started to look at education in the schools to inform the young people of exactly what happens. What is wrong with showing a cancerous lung or someone suffering from asthma or a similar condition? What is wrong with showing the school children exactly what happens?

The government can tell young people not to do it but chances are they will do it. The more costly the government makes it the more it will be in demand.

**Mr. Bill Casey:** Mr. Speaker, the member may not have heard me earlier say that taxation should be part of a strategy to help people with this addiction and that education would be a big part of it. Industry pressure and public awareness would also be part of it.

I was startled when I saw the government ad on television that said 45,000 people a year die from diseases attributable to smoking. I thought it was so wrong that I asked for the report. The report showed that it was right. That is the equivalent of one World Trade Center attack every month in Canada.

We can do more in the House and the government can do more. It is a wide range of things from taxation to education, pressure and public awareness.

**Mr. Peter Adams:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to answer my own question. I tend to agree very much with the member's point of view. I think I have the sense about education, that if we tell kids to do something they very likely will do it.

I think the answer is that prohibition did not work. I mentioned that I live close to a tobacco growing area. I also live close to Lake Ontario. If we look back at what prohibition did for alcohol consumption, it did the opposite to what it tried to do. In fact it glamorized alcohol and made the situation worse, and we are still recovering from it.

*Government Orders*

I appreciate my colleague's interest in this matter and that would be the point that I was trying to make.

**Mr. Bill Casey:** Mr. Speaker, seeing as how the member answered his own question it is difficult but I feel obligated to respond. I understand that the member comes from tobacco growing area and that is a big part of the agricultural industry in his area. That is always a problem. We need to create balance or help that industry as well if there is a big effect. I understand that position but I think we can do a lot more.

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-47. At the outset, I would like to say that I will be splitting my time with my friend and all around great guy, the member for Medicine Hat.

Bill C-47 attempts to amend the Excise Tax Act. I will begin my remarks by taking this opportunity to first of all thank my leader, Stephen Harper, for entrusting me with the responsibilities of critiquing the government as the senior opposition critic for national revenue.

As we know, the Canadian Alliance is dedicated to reducing the size and scope of the federal government in order to deliver meaningful tax relief to hard-working Canadians. As a small business owner, I have firsthand knowledge and experience in dealing with the difficulties inherent in complying with CCRA regulations and remittance schedules. I look forward to being an advocate on behalf of millions of Canadian small and medium sized businesses that prosper in spite of the federal government's insatiable appetite for tax revenues.

Bill C-47 addresses excise tax. Although I am opposed to the government's intervention into the freedom of choice of Canadians through taxation, I will be supporting the legislation as it has been endorsed by industry stakeholders and modernizes the framework of excise taxation on wine, spirits and beer.

The proposed excise tax 2001 aims to replace the existing old and antiquated administrative and enforcement structure governing alcohol and tobacco products with a modern regime reflecting current practices. It does not address the tax rate and base matters other than to ensure equitable treatment between domestic and imported products.

The proposed act shifts compliance and point of taxation from a sales levy to a production levy for the production of wine. This is already the case for distillers.

The changes introduced for spirits and wine are regulatory in nature and tax neutral. The primary purpose of these changes are to modernize how these products are taxed to allow distillers and vintners the greatest flexibility in their production practices and to ensure an internationally competitive tax regime.

From an industry perspective the proposed legislation also provides for an appeal and assessment process. Previously industry had no recourse against the government if it felt unfairly treated.

The motion also contains significant enforcement tools to crack down on contraband products. This is a major feature of the proposed legislation and is welcomed by industry.

Changes in the act make it easier to enforce existing laws and provide stiffer penalties for conviction. For example, under the proposed legislation the maximum fine for producing contraband alcohol would be up to \$1 million and up to five years in jail for indictable offences. These are industry-led, spirits and wine, and supported changes. There are no losers because of this legislation with the exception of contraband producers.

It is the second aspect of Bill C-47 with which I personally have problems. The bill also seeks to increase the federal excise taxes on tobacco products and to re-establish a uniform federal excise tax rate for cigarettes across the country of \$6.85 per carton. The stated purpose of this tax increase is to improve the health of Canadians by discouraging tobacco consumption.

The federal excise taxes on cigarettes will increase \$2.00 per carton in Quebec, \$1.60 per carton in Ontario and \$1.50 per carton in the rest of Canada. This will bring the total federal excise burden on cigarettes to \$12.35 per carton. Federal revenues will increase by approximately \$240 million per annum through this tax hike.

We all want Canadians to live a healthier lifestyle, especially our youth. The reduction of smoking is a big part of that. My problem with this legislation is philosophical and based on the process. The past decade has proven that high levels of excise tax on cigarettes do not reduce consumption. It only creates an underground market. The role of government is to provide information for consumers to ensure that citizens have an informed choice. Make no mistake, it is the right of individuals to choose whether or not they want to smoke.

It is my belief that the government is increasing the tax levels simply to increase revenues. It is the only politically correct tax increase at its disposal, and the finance minister has never found a tax he did not like.

● (1535)

There are many Canadians out there who believe that excise taxes are dedicated to specific spending, that tax revenues on cigarettes and alcohol are spent on health care and that gas tax revenues are spent on roads. The truth is that while federal excise revenues have increased, transfers to provinces for health care have decreased.

What are Canadians going to get in return for this blatant tax grab? I challenge the government opposite to detail what its plan is for the revenues.

Contrary to what the government thinks, Canadians are not stupid. The tax increase is of the same ilk as the airport security tax. The Liberals are manipulating the concerns of Canadians to finance their next election campaign. The government opposite cannot escape its past nor its record. The transitional jobs fund, Shawinigan, Groupaction and everything Alfonso Gagliano ever touched raised doubts in the minds of Canadians regarding Liberal accountability, ethics and fiscal restraint.

*Government Orders*

The Liberals have once again piggybacked meaningful legislation and political opportunism. The Prime Minister in the past has appointed a qualified Canadian and a Liberal hack to the other place at the same time. When one criticizes a patronage appointment, the Liberals defend it with the credentials of the qualified candidate. Today they are hiking taxes under the guise of tax fairness, and that is unethical. The Liberals are politically savvy and ethically devoid.

I will support the legislation because it is in the best interests of Canada's emerging industries. However through this piece of legislation, the government has added another chapter to the red book of Liberal shame.

● (1540)

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise and address this legislation today. I want to take a little different tack than my friend just took a moment ago, but I am very sympathetic to a lot of the things he had to say.

The reason the government is proposing to raise the excise tax on cigarettes is it believes that if it raises the tax on cigarettes young people will be sensitive to that price increase and therefore will not smoke as much. The proposals are to raise the excise tax, I think \$2 in Quebec, \$1.60 in Ontario and \$1.50 in the rest of Canada.

I would like to go from there. If the government believes that raising taxes on cigarettes will discourage a particular kind of activity, I simply point out that raising other taxes also discourages activity.

For instance, right now the government is in the process of raising CPP premiums. In other words, raising payroll taxes. What kind of activity does that discourage? It discourages the hiring of employees because when we raise a tax we create a tax wedge between the price that employers would typically pay to hire an employee and what goes beyond what they would be willing to pay. In a case like CPP, and sometimes between the CPP and EI premiums, it gets to a point where employers say that it is simply just too much tax and they will not hire particular employees.

I wanted to point that out because the government cannot have it both ways. It cannot say that higher taxes on cigarettes will discourage smoking for young people but raising CPP premiums will not discourage hiring. In fact it is the same in both cases.

This is a problem not just with CPP premiums. It goes well beyond that because although income taxes are not going up in Canada right now they are still much higher than they are in other jurisdictions. Therefore the same principle applies. If we have taxes that are higher in Canada than they are for instance in the United States, our largest trading partner, people then will say that they cannot afford to do business in Canada but can afford to do business in the United States. Even having taxes that are mildly lower for instance in some areas in Canada than they are in the United States will not do the job because business people and investors look at the total package.

The government has made much about the fact that corporate taxes are mildly lower in Canada than they are in the United States. However what it neglects to understand is that people who are casting about for a place to invest want to have access to the U.S. market. They used to come to Canada because they had pretty much

assured access to the American market. That has changed now since September 11, so we have to go well beyond just having one tax mildly lower than it is in the United States. I am talking about corporate taxes. We need to have the whole basket of taxes much lower than they are in the United States, if we ever are going to fulfill our potential as a nation.

Again, the same principles apply to corporate taxes, income taxes and other taxes as apply to excise taxes. We cannot have higher taxes without discouraging particular kinds of activity, and the same thing applies on income taxes, capital gains and corporate taxes. The government has to realize that.

I cannot believe that the government has been able to stare a 62 cent dollar in the face and not have some kind of a vision or strategy to start to attract investment back from the United States and other parts of the world and to keep investment already in Canada. We know there is a huge capital outflow in Canada today. This is partly driven by high tax loads. As a country, we have to have a strategy to attract some of that investment back. Why? Is it because we just want good numbers or we want to have a bunch of money pour into the country to benefit a few people? No. It benefits the entire nation.

● (1545)

When investment flows into a country, it can be used to purchase equipment to make it more productive as a nation. Talented individuals can be hired to improve one's business, to produce new products, to be innovative and take initiative. When that is done, good paying jobs are soon produced and one comes up with new markets for the products. All of a sudden more people can be hired and there is a demand for good people.

If we were to keep that up, there would soon be enough activity in the economy that the unemployment problem would not exist any more. Instead of the old story of three people chasing one job, it would become three jobs chasing one person. Ultimately the entire country would benefit. We would not have a situation like the one we have in Canada today.

Although we have a relatively low unemployment rate compared to where it was a few years ago, we still have an unemployment rate that is completely unacceptable. Millions of Canadians still cannot find work. If we had a job market that was absolutely on fire, businesses would go into areas of unemployment to offer people on the job training and the skills and abilities necessary to succeed. It has happened in other jurisdictions.

In Alberta the economy is heating up again. The Alberta economy in the last number of years has been so hot we have attracted people not only from all over Canada but from all over the world.

In Brooks, Alberta where I live there is a meat packing plant and an oil industry which attract people from all over. Many people have come from Atlantic Canada because they cannot find jobs in Atlantic Canada. We have low taxes in Alberta. We have an environment that is conducive to business. Businesses start to look around for people to hire. They advertise in the newspapers across Atlantic Canada.

*Government Orders*

People come from all over the world to my little town. It is an amazing place now. What used to be a farming and ranching town made up of a couple of generations of people who came in the 1920s is now a very cosmopolitan place. There are people from all over the world. People come from Asia, Africa and eastern Europe to our little town because we have lots of jobs due to the prosperity that has been created by a climate that is conducive to business.

I simply want to point out the inconsistency between what the government is doing on excise taxes for cigarettes and its overall approach to taxation. In this case it understands that raising taxes on cigarettes may dissuade young people from buying cigarettes but it does not seem to understand, or at least we do not see it in budgets, that lowering taxes invites people to invest in the country. That is obviously a very serious problem.

As our dollar continues to plummet, more and more people are coming to the understanding that their standard of living is in peril. The industry minister a couple of years ago pointed out that Canada's standard of living had fallen below that of Mississippi and Alabama, the poorest of the poor American states. That came from the industry minister on the government side.

It is time for the government to wake up and address this serious issue which impacts every single Canadian today. If it finally does wake up and starts to address it, I can guarantee that the official opposition will support it.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to address this bill on the taxation of spirits, wine and tobacco and the treatment of ships' stores.

Let me say from the outset that the Bloc Québécois supports this bill. However, I would like to draw attention to an issue on which the bill is silent, namely the tax imposed on Canada's small regional breweries and called the excise tax on beer.

There are several small regional breweries in Quebec. I know that there are also some in Ontario and in other regions of Canada. These small businesses are called microbreweries. I would like to name a few from Quebec: the Brasseurs de la chasse-galerie, in Candiac; the Brasseurs RJ, in Montreal; the Brasseurs du Nord, in Blainville; the Brasserie McAuslan, in Saint-Henri; Unibroue, in Chambly; the Brasserie Saint-Arnauld, in Saint-Jovite; and the Seigneuriale, in Boucherville. I am sure that I forgot some. I just wanted to point out that there are several such breweries in Quebec.

The Brewers Association of Canada represented these people before the Standing Committee on Finance, in October. They told us about the difficult situation that these microbreweries are currently facing. They submitted a very good brief and they presented strong arguments in favour of a reduction of the excise tax imposed on Canada's small breweries.

I want to mention that both the Minister for International Trade and the Minister of Finance were approached. They were informed of the problems currently faced by small breweries. The ministers promised to look at the matter, but we have yet to hear from them. However, it is important that the government look at the situation of microbreweries. We want to export our products—because we are

proud of them—both from Quebec and Canada, but we must give our producers the means to develop them.

Let me explain the situation and the context. In the context of globalization, these small businesses called microbreweries must compete with foreign businesses that have a much smaller tax burden than Canadian companies.

In an increasingly open market, competition is not necessarily coming from within but, rather, from established breweries abroad. These businesses often enjoy preferential tax treatment, which allows them to sell their products at more competitive prices. The Canadian parliament must keep this in mind when legislating.

Currently, France, Germany, Belgium and our U.S. neighbour grant their small breweries a reduction on excise taxes. Canada is one of the few industrialized countries that refuses to give what could be called a privilege, a fair treatment or excise tax parity to its small breweries.

For example, let us take the case of one microbrewery in Canada and another in the United States. In Canada, a brewery producing 6.5 million litres pays federal excise tax of 28 cents a litre, for a total of \$1.8 million.

In the United States, the same entrepreneur in Boston, for example, would pay \$585,000 rather than \$1.8 million, or a tax of 9 cents a litre. So, as hon. members can see, the excise tax in Canada is 28 cents, while in Boston it is 9 cents.

● (1550)

These figures, I think, speak for themselves. For the same production, there is a difference in taxes paid of \$1.2 million. What, Mr. Speaker, would you do if you were planning to develop a microbrewery? It would be in your interests to go to the States, because otherwise all your profits would be swallowed up. A company cannot survive such a tax.

This is why the Brewers Association of Canada is calling upon the Government of Canada to make a 60% reduction in the excise tax on the first 75,000 hectolitres produced by Canadian breweries producing a maximum of 300,000 hectolitres annually. In this they have the support of the four largest Canadian breweries belonging to the association. Speaking of major Canadian breweries, I would like to name a few, but I know very well that everyone knows their names.

It must be mentioned that between them, the 53 breweries that pay excise taxes shell out \$19 million per year. That is not small potatoes. A study done in 1995 of Ontario breweries demonstrated that the excise tax is nine times greater than profits in the sector, profits estimated to be \$2.1 million. Therefore, \$19 million was paid in excise taxes by 53 breweries with estimated profits of \$2.1 million. Something is not right with this equation. Excise taxes are disproportionately high compared to revenues. This kind of approach leads to bankruptcy. Something really must be done.

*Government Orders*

There are also repercussions in the regions. These small breweries can be found in just about every region. They are small businesses set up in small communities, which contribute a great deal to their development. They are tourist attractions, which generates employment, and consequently, more financial resources.

Unfortunately, as I explained earlier, this unfair and untenable situation that the industry is up against constitutes a very real threat. Only three months ago, there were 19 small scale breweries in Quebec. Now there are six. They are handing over their profits and them some in excise taxes. These breweries are often being forced into bankruptcy or dire financial straits. Only six of 19 are still in business because five went bankrupt, three closed their doors, two were sold and three are experiencing temporary difficulties.

The situation demands to be rectified. The government must now make decisions that will help these small entrepreneurs.

I am referring to Quebec, but I know that you being a Franco-Ontarian, Mr. Speaker, are surely experiencing the same problem in the regions of Ontario. I spoke of Franco-Ontarians, but the situation also applies to all of Ontario, English speaking Ontario. There are microbreweries for which I could probably quote similar figures.

It begs the question: given the current state of affairs, why should microbreweries continue to invest in Canada, when there are incredible benefits to setting up shop in the United States? I mentioned the example of Boston earlier. Clearly, if I were an entrepreneur wanting to make a profit, by doing an impact or feasibility study, I would see that staying in Canada is not to my advantage.

The excise tax represents a very heavy burden for these small Canadian businesses. It is therefore urgent that the excise tax program be amended.

In other sectors of activity, small businesses investing \$1 million in land, equipment and facilities are successful. They hire fifteen or so people and have sales of \$1.5 million to \$2 million. They make a profit and shareholders take a profit. They are successful.

• (1555)

For microbreweries, it is a completely different scenario. With sales of \$1.5 million to \$2 million, they barely break even; no clear profit, but a requirement to pay a little over \$200,000 in excise taxes to the federal government. The excise taxes are unrelenting. Let us be clear: excise taxes are higher than labour costs. There is no logic to this; the excise tax makes no sense.

The government must recognize that small breweries are distinct and should be taxed accordingly. The government is the only party that still does not recognize this. The amendment requested is minimal compared to the revenues generated by the general tax. The proposed tax break would represent only 2% of what the government collects in excise taxes. Let us be clear that this concerns a small sector which is highly labour-intensive, manufacturing-intensive, with heavy investment, a sector which plays a vital role in small communities and in their provinces.

The current fiscal regime simply does not correspond to the reality of microbreweries. Today, the taxes in this sector add up to 58% of the sales price; excise taxes represent 16% of the sales price,

compared to only 4% in the United States. The conclusions are simple: a small brewery operating in Canada pays four times more in excise taxes than one operating in Boston, U.S.A.

If we look at competition within North America, beer sales are considerable between Canada and the United States. For there to be fair competition, it is imperative that the cost structure in both countries be as harmonized as possible.

On both sides of the border, small breweries are manufacturing special products and are competing in the same market. The international situation is such that all distributors in Canada now stock imported beers, which account for 8% of the market. Generally speaking, imports have more than doubled during the last ten years, while the market share of Canadian microbreweries has remained almost unchanged. They are not competitive, particularly as far as the giant U.S. companies are concerned.

One of the reasons for this is that Canadian producers—this is the reason—must pay nearly three times as much in taxes as their American competitors. South of the border, small U.S. breweries are better able to strengthen their trade activities because they shoulder a lighter tax burden, they are able to open new markets and expand their territory.

In 2000, the number of American breweries with an annual production of less than 75,000 hectolitres with exports to Canada doubled compared to 1995, climbing from 6 to 14. Something is not fair. The Americans are able to double the number of companies doing business here, yet we cannot even operate because we pay too much in excise taxes.

For more than eight years now, Canada has been complaining that the U.S. does not respect NAFTA rules and has adopted protectionist measures for its small breweries. NAFTA allows the free trade of goods, but in the current context, the result is catastrophic for small breweries. They are unable to fend for themselves on an equal footing with small American breweries.

The North American Free Trade Agreement is not the problem; the problem is our neighbours, who are not respecting it. They are using discriminatory tax provisions to give their microbreweries an advantage, and as a result, they are penalizing ours. We know they are good at respecting rules when it suits them. We have seen this with softwood lumber; in that case, it does not suit them.

• (1600)

Moreover, what we have to say today, the Minister for International Trade has already heard, as I have said. The minister had no objection to extending the same privileges to small Canadian breweries. As I said, nobody has yet moved on this. Even the Minister of Finance has been informed of the situation, but we are still waiting.

*Government Orders*

Our businesses are capable of producing products that compare very favourably with others. Our entrepreneurs want to be able to manufacture or sell them at competitive prices. Yet a bad taxation system prevents them from holding their own with foreign competition.

In 1992, Canada made a court challenge on non-compliance with the agreements of the GATT, now known as WTO, or World Trade Organization. A committee mandated to analyze the complaint found that the imposition on eligible producers by the U.S. federal government, as well as some of the state governments, of a lower excise tax on beer sold outside the country, combined with some other practices in place in various states, was not in compliance with U.S. obligations under the GATT or WTO, in that imported beer did not receive the best national treatment.

Ten years have now gone by. Not only has the American government maintained its position, but a number of states have implemented new measures giving their producers favourable treatment. This constitutes real discrimination against the importers of Canadian beers to the U.S.

In conclusion, I feel it is urgent to take steps if we want to see this small brewery sector survive. A reduction in the excise tax on small Canadian breweries, the microbreweries, would respect the policies adopted by the majority of the world's beer producing countries.

Our microbreweries have now been waiting more than eight years for duty parity. The impact on government revenue would be minimal, but the advantageous impact on the sector is undeniable. The government has a duty to do everything in its power to ensure the success of companies and individuals. Reducing the excise tax for Canada's small breweries constitutes one approach to encouraging their growth. This is part of a policy aimed at enhancing the country's productivity and the standard of living of Quebecers and Canadians.

In closing, I would again make the Minister of Finance and the Minister for International Trade aware of the situation so that they will keep the promise they made to the brewers' associations of Canada to reduce the excise tax on microbreweries.

• (1605)

[*English*]

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in debate on Bill C-47, an act respecting the taxation of spirits, wine and tobacco and the treatment of ships' stores. Members of my caucus have already addressed the principal aspects of the bill, which we intend to support, while I note that we have certain very pertinent concerns. My colleague from Edmonton—Strathcona outlined them as they relate to the provisions of the bill dealing with the excise tax on tobacco products, which will increase revenues to the federal treasury by at least \$240 million.

It is our concern that this could lead to an increase in the black market in tobacco products and furthermore that the \$240 million will find its way into general purposes in the general revenue fund. We believe that any targeted tax increases of this nature, which are designed to achieve a certain social outcome such as the reduction of tobacco use among youth, ought to be offset by a commensurate

reduction in general tax rates elsewhere. To do otherwise is to fail to recognize that Canada continues to have an inordinately high tax burden, which disadvantages Canadian industry entrepreneurs and reduces the amount of capital available in the country for investment in job creation. I share those concerns with other members of my caucus.

I would like to take most of my time to join with the member who just spoke in addressing a pertinent issue that did not find its way into the bill, namely, the treatment of microbreweries, which are an important part of Canadian industry. The bill would have been the perfect place in which to address the inequity of taxation of microbreweries. Indeed, the government has received representations from the Brewers Association of Canada, as has the House of Commons finance committee, to rectify the discriminatory application of excise taxation on these very small, entrepreneurial, craft style breweries.

The House of Commons finance committee heard from the Brewers Association of Canada last October, when it recommended in a very compelling submission that the government reduce by 60% the excise taxation for the first 75,000 hectolitres of production for microbreweries, which the association defines as those that have an annual production output of less than 300,000 hectolitres per year.

Currently small breweries pay \$19 million a year in excise taxes. Those are the 53 breweries in Canada that produce less than 300,000 hectolitres a year. That \$19 million in federal excise tax exceeds by nine times the \$2.1 million of collective profits reported by those 53 companies. In other words, the amount the federal government is taking from these struggling entrepreneurs outstrips by nearly a factor of 10 the profits they are able to retain to reinvest in their companies to purchase capital assets that are necessary for these companies to continue. This is a very grave situation for the microbrewery industry in Canada.

Several provinces have addressed this. British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland have all adopted a lower rate of provincial excise tax to be applied to microbreweries. Indeed, this reflects international precedents throughout the world and among our major economic competitors in the United States.

• (1610)

About 21 million hectolitres of beer are sold and consumed annually in Canada. Of that enormous amount only 3.4%, and I admit to having contributed to a small part of the figure, has been produced by small breweries, namely those with a production of less than 300,000 hectolitres per year. This gives us an idea of how small a piece of the overall market they are.

I am a partisan of microbreweries. I am a big fan of what I think is Canada's finest microbrewery and finest brewery, period. It is known as Big Rock and it happens to be in my riding. It produces tremendous products like Traditional Ale, Grasshopper Wheat Ale, Warthog Cream Ale, and my favourite, McNally's stout. Its products are famous throughout Canada. It is an award winning microbrewery founded by distinguished Calgary lawyer Ed McNally. It has done very well notwithstanding the discriminatory tax regime it finds itself fighting against.

*Government Orders*

It is interesting. There are only four companies responsible for 93% of the beer sold in Canada, and they support the proposal for the government to adopt a lower rate for smaller breweries. They are not threatened by the small microbreweries. They see microbreweries like Big Rock in my riding and Unibroue in Chambly, Quebec as an opportunity to increase their market share by increasing beer consumption. They are not afraid of this kind of competition. They see that the application of one excise tax to all companies of all sizes is not fair.

Total excise duty revenues to the government for beer currently amount to about \$580 million. If the government were to adopt the recommendations of the Brewers Association of Canada, remembering that they produce only 3.5% of the product and pay about \$19 million in excise tax a year, the reduction would represent only 2% of the total excise for beer collected by the federal government. A 60% reduction in the excise rate for small brewers on the first 75,000 hectolitres would be a tiny reduction in government revenues. As the brewers association points out, "the impact would be no greater than could be felt from the market effects of poor summer weather". It would have no significant impact on the federal treasury.

Were we to allow these breweries to generate a small profit and reinvest it we would see them expand their market share and exports. Even at a lower excise rate the federal treasury would see an increase in the total amount paid by the companies. It would likely see total excise tax revenues for microbreweries increase at a lower rate given the incentive it would create for new investment, production and consumption in the industry.

I will illustrate the magnitude of the tax and address the impact it would have on small brewers. Excise is the highest federal tax paid by the brewing industry. It is the highest cost borne by microbrewers. It is currently \$27.98 per hectolitre. That means the excise duty equals the average cost of operating a small brewery. The cost is estimated to be about \$30 per hectolitre. Direct labour costs are estimated at about \$27 per hectolitre. This means the excise tax, which is insensitive to profit and is charged and collected even if a brewery is losing money, equals the total cost of running a small brewery in Canada.

•(1615)

A benchmark study conducted by the brewers association in Ontario in 1995 found that taxes represented the largest category of costs, amounting to the equivalent of total production costs including raw materials. The study said the tax burden was extremely high "particularly considering that microbrewers are effectively small businesses often competing with large companies".

Most of the companies reviewed in the study lost money. Normal rates of return fell short by \$17 per hectolitre. The companies are producing a great product, they are working hard and they are entrepreneurial. Yet they are not able to generate a profit. That is why many of them are going under. There is a high bankruptcy rate in the microbrewery industry in Canada.

The findings suggest the federal excise rate places brewing companies at a significant disadvantage compared to other small business in Canada. The Income Tax Act sets out a preferential lower rate for small businesses as opposed to large businesses. We do not expect family owned corner stores with capitalizations of a few

hundred thousand dollars to be able to compete while paying the same fixed level of taxation as a Safeway or Loblaws. It is not possible given their much smaller economies of scale and higher costs. That is why I think all parties in this place support the principle of a lower small business tax rate.

The brewers association is simply asking that the same logic be applied to the brewing industry. This would allow us to recognize that the costs of producing microbrewery products in small operations are much higher than for Labatt or Molson, companies which retain profits and have huge factory operations across the country, enormous economies of scale and great capitalization. They can afford to pay a higher excise tax rate. Indeed, they have endorsed the idea of a differential rate.

Another important factor is international competitiveness. The United States has a much lower federal excise tax rate on microbrewery products. It charges only \$9.35 per hectolitre for products sold in the United States while Canada charges \$24.06. That is a difference of 146%. When Big Rock Brewery in my constituency, Granville Island Brewery in Vancouver or the brewery in Chambly, Quebec try to export their products into the United States they are at a 146% cost disadvantage because of the difference in federal excise tax rates. That means we will never be able to penetrate the U.S. market with our superior products as we should.

This has been raised at the GATT panel. In 1992 Canada filed a complaint to the panel of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. The panel reported that the U.S. was violating free trade rules by not permitting national treatment in terms of excise tax on microbrewery products sold domestically.

However the United States has not corrected the problem. Most countries in the European Union have adopted separate lower excise tax rates on the output of small breweries notwithstanding trade action that has been taken against the European Union. They have retained the differential as a matter of policy, which makes it difficult for Canadian microbrewers to sell their product in the European Union.

*Government Orders*

●(1620)

It is interesting. Adopting the proposal of the Brewers Association of Canada would reduce the premium paid by Canadian brewers from \$16.30 per hectolitre over like sized U.S. competitors to \$1.26 per hectolitre, or 11% as opposed to the 146% I quoted earlier. The suggestion the Canadian Brewers Association is making would not bring us precisely in line with the domestic excise tax rate in the United States. It would simply bring us into the ballpark so Canadian brewers could sell their product in that country at much higher levels without the penalties we impose on them in Canada.

Canada currently receives microbrewery products from about 95 different breweries throughout the world. About 60% of the companies that sell microbrew products in Canada receive favourable excise tax rates in their domestic markets. We are putting our companies at a competitive disadvantage. The trade actions we have taken have not resulted in national treatment for our products in those countries. We have only one policy option left, and that is to do what the Americans and Europeans have done. We must come up with a second, lower rate for small brewers.

I will quote from the submission of the Brewers Association of Canada to the House of Commons finance committee. It said:

Over time, as other countries have failed to introduce trade compliant policies, the industry has concluded that competitor neutrality within the small segment can only be achieved by introducing a tax measure that has come to be accepted internationally as a means of supporting small brewers.

The official opposition calls on the government to take up the matter urgently in the strongest possible terms. There is no sound policy or fiscal reason why the recommendation of the brewers association ought not be accepted with due haste to allow the microbrewing industry in Canada, an important fledgling value added industry, to survive and prosper both here and abroad.

Once more, the recommendation we and the brewers association are making to the government is a 60% reduction in the rate of duty on the first 75,000 hectolitres of production for brewers producing not more than 300,000 hectolitres annually. An excise duty reduction for small brewers in Canada would be consistent with policies adopted by major beer producing nations like the United States, Belgium, Austria, Denmark, Germany and the Czech Republic. The countries providing the benefit account for about a third of worldwide beer production. The reduction's impact on government revenues would be minimal but the benefit to the small brewer segment would be significant.

There is a precise reason the Brewers Association of Canada came up with a figure of 60%. A 1994 study indicated average Canadian small breweries were falling behind in the amount of money they should be reinvesting to purchase new capital assets, by \$16.89 per hectolitre. The study said a 60% reduction in excise tax for such breweries would return about \$16.80 to the sector.

There is a clear symmetry here. The reduction in excise tax would not be a giveaway to the industry. It would allow small struggling breweries to run just enough of a profit to invest in needed capital assets so they could sustain themselves and grow in the future. It would create thousands of new jobs. It would generate prospectively tens of millions of dollars in revenue to the federal treasury. It would

help our country become more export oriented in this important industry.

I hope the government takes heed and soon introduces legislation to adopt the recommendations presented at the finance committee.

\* \* \*

●(1625)

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties and I believe if you seek it you would find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That the debate pursuant to Standing Order 52 this day shall continue until no member rises to speak, provided that, after 10 p.m., the Chair shall receive no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent to propose any motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

**EXCISE ACT, 2001**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-47, an act respecting the taxation of spirits, wine and tobacco and the treatment of ships' stores, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**An hon. member:** On division.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Finance.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

\* \* \*

**PEST CONTROL PRODUCTS ACT**

The House resumed from April 8 consideration of the motion that Bill C-53, an act to protect human health and safety and the environment by regulating products used for the control of pests, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me start by thanking the Minister of Health for her speech yesterday and particularly for what she said at the outset:

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—the purpose of federal pest management regulation is to protect Canadians and their environment from the risks associated with pesticides.

She went on to say:

The proposed new PCPA would ensure Canada's children and other vulnerable populations were given special protection from the health risks posed by pesticides. It would do so by enshrining in legislation the requirement to incorporate modern risk assessment concepts—

She also said:

It is important to keep in mind why we regulate pesticides. We do so for a variety of reasons including the following: Some pesticides may pose risks to people and the environment; many pesticides are released into the environment; our exposure to many pesticides is involuntary; and redressing harm from pesticide exposure is generally difficult.

Human exposure can occur when pesticides such as those used in agriculture, forestry, lawn and garden care, and on golf courses are released into the environment where people may be exposed to them involuntarily. In addition, since pesticides are often applied to crops and livestock we may be exposed to their residues involuntarily through the food we eat.

It would be an understatement to say that the bill is long overdue. It amends legislation passed in 1969. It is therefore highly welcome, badly needed and most appreciated by anyone concerned with public health as affected by pesticides.

Before going into the pros and cons of the bill, it would seem desirable to say a couple of words about its title. The official title of the bill is “an act to protect human health and safety and the environment by regulating products used for the control of pests”. However, the short title of the bill is same as the title of the legislation it is supposed to replace, namely “pest control products act”.

It would seem to me that to continue with the use of the old term, pest control products act, would mean adopting an industry oriented title, not a publicly oriented one as the full title conveys. If the intent of the bill is truly to protect human health and welfare, then this contradiction in titles should be corrected.

An appropriate short title might read “an act on the use of pesticides” or “an act on dangerous substances used to control pests” or simply, “the pesticides licensing act”. Instead, what is being proposed is a short title with a focus on pest control products and as such, it sounds pretty good to consumers. After all, who could be against the control of pests? To conclude, the long title is good, but the short title leaves much to be desired.

Bill C-53 has been in the making for some time. In its report on pesticides, the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development made many recommendations, some of which appear to have gone unnoticed. I will mention some shortly but first I have a few words on the new and positive features of the bill before us today.

First, human health and the environment, as other members have commented before me, are now leading principles of the proposed legislation.

Second, in evaluating the health and environmental risks of pesticides, the minister must now apply appropriate margins of safety for pregnant women, infants, children, women and seniors and must apply a margin of safety 10 times greater than now if a product is to be used around homes or schools.

Third, in determining maximum residue limits in foods, the law will require the use of an additional safety factor of 10 in determining the tolerance of pesticide residue in foodstuffs.

● (1630)

It will require the application of appropriate margins of safety for pregnant women, infants, children, women and seniors. It will require the implementation of government policy as defined in the toxic substances management policy, which I am told does include track one toxic substances under CEPA. Finally, it will require the application of such government policy through sections 7(8) and 19 (3).

Fourth, pest control products must now meet the requirements of the workplace hazardous materials information system. This insertion is in answer to many interventions, including the one by the member for Ottawa West when we were in committee.

Fifth, there is a very narrow application of the precautionary principle. For instance, the minister may cancel or amend the registration of a pest control product if, in the course of a re-evaluation or a special review, the minister has reasonable grounds to believe that the cancellation or amendment is necessary to deal with a situation that endangers human health or safety or the environment.

Sixth, as to the re-evaluation of existing pesticides, with this bill all pesticides are to be reviewed every 15 years, which is not as good as the recommendation made in committee which suggested that by the year 2006, if I remember correctly. The term in the special review will be mandatory for any pesticide banned or restricted by an OECD country, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris.

These positive features tell us that the government recognizes the fact that pesticides, euphemistically called pest control products, are highly dangerous substances which should be used rarely and with extreme care. Otherwise how could one explain the symbol of the skull and crossbones used to identify most pesticides, softened in its impact by the intensive advertising campaign by pesticide manufacturers who find it necessary to try to convince the public that everything is fine with pesticides? For instance, in the mollifying ads promoting lawn beautification the word pesticides never appears. What we are treated to are bucolic green lawns, happy children playing and pets frolicking in a sea of perfectly uniform green blades of grass.

It should also be noted that in its attempt to dominate the market, industry avoids the word pesticides and instead uses intriguing, scientific sounding formulas like 2,4-D or other fancy abbreviations intended to reassure the potential consumer of chemicals about using pesticides on his or her front yard lawn. Fortunately, municipalities have not been bamboozled by the pesticide industry's public relations campaign. Today over 30 municipalities have banned the cosmetic use of pesticides on private property and in some cases on public property.

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All this is after prolonged and extensive legal battles which peaked last June when the Supreme Court of Canada hit the pesticide industry on the head and gave it a lesson in constitutional law. The court declared that yes, municipalities do have the power to ban the cosmetic use of pesticides and that yes, the public interest can and should be served by municipal governments.

Before leaving the subject, I would like to pay a warm tribute to the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine for her bill on banning the cosmetic use of pesticides. The bill was unanimously adopted at the last national convention of the Liberal Party of Canada. Unfortunately, the cosmetic use of pesticides is not mentioned in Bill C-53, one of several shortcomings which of course could be corrected in committee by way of appropriate amendments.

• (1635)

There are other serious shortcomings in Bill C-53 which I would like to bring to the attention of the House.

There is no statutory mandate and responsibility given to the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, which makes it a rather unique feature in the government structure.

There is no inclusion of the substitution principle, therefore no requirement to deregister older pesticides once newer, safer products are registered and brought to market.

There is a very narrow application of the precautionary principle. Why is it applied only at the consultation or amendment stage of the registration of a pesticide and not right at the beginning of the process, namely when deciding whether to register it or not? That is the question. It would make enormous sense to apply the precautionary principle all the way through as it was already advocated yesterday, if I remember correctly, by the member for Rosemont—Petite—Patrie.

There is no definition of acceptable or unacceptable risk and that is also a very serious matter which needs to be brought to the attention of members.

There is no requirement to take into account aggregate and cumulative exposure when registering a product. Time and again witnesses at committee hearings brought this to our attention, particularly the Canadian Institute of Child Health and other organizations concerned with the health of children.

There is no room for independent scientific findings which could be followed by mandatory feedback. Let us be realistic. Only so much can be achieved through public consultations and comments on decisions. More needs to be done in the public interest.

There is the matter of what constitutes confidential business information and that matter remains the same in this bill as in the 1969 legislation. It seems to me that surely there are situations when the public good can be of greater importance than confidential business information, or am I living on another planet?

Another shortcoming is the fact that the bill focuses only on the active ingredients of a pesticide but not on ingredients that can pose a threat to human health and the environment and are not necessarily active.

Finally, and this may be a budgetary requirement and not necessarily a legislative one, there is a need also identified by the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development for better statistics on pesticides, be it their sales or other related data. There is indeed an important challenge here for Statistics Canada.

As others have already outlined, Bill C-53 is definitely an improvement over the 1969 legislation. It should however be stronger in ensuring a healthy and safe environment for Canadians. The bill relies too heavily on product, product management and product regulation, and too little on the reduction in the use of, the reliance on and the risks posed by pesticides. That in a nutshell would be my way of assessing the bill.

It is my sincere hope that colleagues on the health committee will be able to address these shortcomings and amend the bill, which is quite possible at the committee stage, as members present have experienced.

• (1640)

To conclude, it seems to me that the Canadian population can expect a law which will give full and unconditional precedence to human health and the environment over pesticides and the very powerful industrial interests behind them.

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to what my colleague had to say. I noted that he mentioned the court decision that enabled municipalities to regulate the so-called cosmetic use of pesticides and other products on lawns and things of that type. I thought a good deal about that myself. On the one hand, that is the appropriate jurisdiction to deal with these matters of enforcement. It would be very difficult, for example, for someone in Ottawa to enforce such regulations in downtown Peterborough.

On the other hand, because there are thousands of municipal jurisdictions, it may well take a very long time before they take up the cause as some jurisdictions, such as Quebec, have already done.

In legislation of this type, how could we introduce something that would move along the aspect of what he was discussing? I suppose it might range from advertising and education to a federal government department that might do that. Has he given any thought to a practical way of bringing that aspect into this new legislation?

• (1645)

**Hon. Charles Caccia:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quite right in pointing at the government of Quebec as having introduced legislation which across the board empowers municipalities to ban the cosmetic use of pesticides. In addition to that, some municipalities in other provinces have done so. They were challenged in the supreme court which ruled in their favour.

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However, the main point is this. We did recommend in committee that the federal government could phase-out pesticides that were put on the market for cosmetic purposes alone. We set a time limit of five years. I believe the hon. member from Lachine did the same. It would gradually be phased-out as a decision of the federal government, which is responsible for the registration of products. To decide what enters the market and what does not is fully a federal responsibility. Failing that, then we would have to rely on the goodwill of the provinces or the political will of the municipalities to do it on their own.

As to the final suggestion that a public education program could achieve that purpose, that is a very good idea. However let me draw to the attention of the member the fact that the producers of cosmetic pesticides are very engaged in advertising campaigns themselves which show beautifully uniform green-bladed lawns, happily frolicking pets and the like. Therefore the competition for public attention would be very intense.

**Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciated listening to my learned friend and to the question from the member for Peterborough. I have had more than 50 years of experience with the use of pesticides, insecticides, herbicides and so on. I appreciate the fact that the 1969 legislation needed to be updated. However I suggest to the House and to the Minister of Health that to make the bill effective and to make it have broader appeal, control and easier to regulate, we have to have a program which will involve a great amount of co-operation between the provinces, the local governments and individuals.

When my learned friend was speaking, I could not help but go back to a time that many people will not remember; the grasshopper plague in western Canada. The hordes of grasshoppers blocked out the sun. In an attempt to control this pest, carloads of sawdust were brought in. I do not know what they mixed with it, but as a kid I would throw this out. The control was worth two things and that was nothing twice. It really did nothing in the control the grasshoppers.

It is possible that there are millions of acres in western Canada, given the right temperature and amount of sunshine, that could be facing a similar situation to the thirties. Once before we used a spray called dieldrin that really killed the grasshoppers but it was very hard on the operators. It was a very dangerous insecticide.

We have a situation that has developed where we would not have enough pesticides on hand in western Canada and eastern Canada because the grasshopper population could explode over a weekend with the right amount of hatching. Therefore, those areas that are most polluted with grasshoppers right now and if they have any crops growing, they could lose their crops again without adequate supply. Western Canada has not had any crops for two or three years. I lived through that in the sixties and part of the seventies.

When I talk about co-operation, I know what that means. I know what we have to do and I know that a lot of legwork has to be done to make this bill effective. I have seen children who have been hurt by the spray. I have even seen animals, pets running alongside the tractor and the sprayer, that have been hurt by the spray.

We get so excited at times about some things and then we do the wrong thing. For instance, the same area that is likely to explode with a huge grasshopper population is also an area of western

Saskatchewan and into Alberta that is polluted with the Richardson's ground squirrel or the gopher. We can now get the proper percentage of pesticide and the farmer must bring the oats or grain in to be spread. I do not necessarily disagree with that.

However what happened to the chap who invented the gophinator? It used the same gas as the farms used for fertilization. Just one shot down the hole and it controlled the spread of gophers in a painless way. However the animal rights people did not see that this was not only valuable as a fertilizer and that the pesticide was controlled. Therefore for some reason or another the patent was disallowed. Now this very thing that is being used is labelled a toxic substance. I am not too sure if we do not move in the wrong direction very often.

I would like to relate another incident that we would not allow today, and we have come a long way.

• (1650)

A church group in town bought three extra lots which were once used for propane storage and delivery. They had a herbicide on the market which sold under the generic name of Spike. It was used mainly around the elevators, so any grass fires would not get up close. However, nobody had properly tested that. Let me give some examples. I said that I would plant trees around the edge of that lot but before I did I noticed that nothing was growing there. I took in a soil sample and was told that nothing would grow in that soil for 25 or 30 years and maybe never.

At one of the schools I was supervising they built a football field with a track around the field. They put this Spike herbicide on the field, which was a good idea, but a heavy rain fell. They put enough on that it ran down corner wise some distance away and killed two big pine trees at the edge of the lot. We have come a long way but in some instances we have not come far enough.

Let me tell members about co-operation. Two years ago I had a double row of a very popular hedge called cotoneaster. Cotoneaster is subject to infestations of what I call pear slugs. They are cone shaped like a pear and if they are not controlled they ruin the whole hedge. They do not kill it but it is nothing to look at for the year.

The most effective insecticide was malathion. Let us talk about co-operation. I would tell the widow lady to the east and the one to the west the day I was going to spray the hedge. The smell still got into the house but I wore a mask when I sprayed. Eventually I took the hedge out. I wanted to do that because I did not want to have bad relations with two friends that I have had for years. That is what I mean by co-operation.

Where I live we have all kinds of empty lots. The town does not have enough money to hire crews to keep these vacant lots properly trimmed and so on. The town is caught in a dreadful squeeze. It does not have enough money to hire a crew to keep up the lots. It only has enough money to spray the lots. Some of these sprays come under the province's noxious weed act. All provinces have noxious weed acts. One can see that the ragweed, the sow thistle, the Canadian thistle and so on are very high.

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Here is the catch. If the towns do not go in and spray the ragweed the people who suffer from that pollen will suffer terribly but if the towns do spray then they also suffer. I support the bill but, in all honesty, I think we have to do a fair amount of public relations in order to make it successful.

Let me tell members of another example. When I was farming in Saskatchewan, under the noxious weed act authorities could destroy the weeds on any given piece of land that contained noxious weeds and I would be charged.

Today, however, with the herbicides that have been used it is not difficult to control the weeds. Most spraying is done miles away from another farm or miles away from somebody else and, for the most part, has been mostly controlled.

This is a little off topic but Prince Edward Island developed a genetically modified potato that insects did not chew at the leaves. The excuse customers in the United States used was that they had the right potato but that they were GMO potatoes and that potatoes had to be from Maine first. So the PEI potatoes were banned. PEI went back to growing the original potato. It had a good crop but it had to be sprayed about three times. On that little island the spray comes right up against the schoolyard. They have smaller fields and there is a real problem.

• (1655)

How do we deal with that? How do we deal with taking away the livelihood of an individual and still comply with this particular bill? We need to find ways to make that happen.

I think the government is correct in allowing the municipalities to maintain the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes. I also believe that it will require a great deal of public relations. I believe that one of the things that has to be done with the passage of the bill is that various departments need to co-operate, such as the Department of the Environment and the Department of Health, in putting out a campaign across the country showing the health dangers and also co-operating at the local level with the municipalities and the provinces.

If there is indeed an outbreak of grasshoppers this spring the municipality's responsibility is to spray some of those roadways where most of the eggs are lying at the present time. This is a big problem and perhaps bigger out there where there are so many acres and so many problems that we have, particularly with gophers, grasshoppers and so on.

We believe that proven sound science domestically and so on should be on an ongoing basis for debate so that we can provide the best for those who are growing the products but also the best for our health and in particular the health of children and, as my hon. friend mentioned, pregnant women and so on.

I support the bill. I think we can do great things with the co-operation of the federal government, the provincial governments, the municipalities and the individuals who have to use the products.

• (1700)

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to read from a book entitled *Our Stolen Future* written in 1996 by three famous scientists: Theo Colborn, Diane Dumanoski and John Peterson Myers. It states:

Through the creation and release of billions of pounds of man-made chemicals over the past half century, we have been making broadscale changes to the Earth's atmosphere and even in the chemistry of our own bodies. Now, for example, with a stunning hole in the Earth's protective ozone layer and, it appears, the dramatic decline in human sperm counts, the results of this experiment are hitting home. From any perspective, these are two huge signals of trouble. The systems undermined are among those that make life possible. The magnitude of the damage that has already occurred should leave any thoughtful person profoundly shaken.

Theo Colborn appeared before the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development during its review of pesticides. She urged us very strongly to review our legislation and to bring in better and improved legislation.

I would first like to commend the minister for bringing forward this new legislation which is, by any standard, an improvement on the existing one which goes back to 1969 and is therefore 33 years old.

I should mention that the process for managing and regulating pesticides goes back quite a long way.

The previous Conservative government produced a report that was known as the purple book. In October 1994, I was one of four parliamentary secretaries assigned to implement the recommendations in the purple book. One of the recommendations called for the establishment of a pest management agency, which is now called the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, that would be transferred from the department of agriculture to the department of health in 1995.

After the environment and sustainable development committee held hearings over many months, it made recommendations in a report produced on May 16, 2000 entitled "Pesticides: Making the Right Choice".

I would like to take a minute to congratulate my colleague from Davenport who was chair of the committee at the time. The committee did very deep study on a critical issue for all of us concerned with human health and the environment. It was a groundbreaking report that led to the introduction of this legislation, which thankfully follows many of the recommendations contained in the report.

We can see many improvements reflected in the recommendations from the report. The bill's primary objective is to prevent unacceptable risks to people and the environment from the use of pest control products. The critical question of assessment of risk is based on the consideration of children's health, pregnant women, seniors and, in certain cases, of special risk in a safety margin 10 times greater than would otherwise be predicated.

The bill provides for a public registry which is a good start to giving the public access to health information. Whistleblower protection is provided in a meaningful way. There is the possibility of sharing information among government departments, a question which was raised by the commissioner for sustainable development who had strongly criticized the government for lack of communication among its departments with regard to pesticides. The bill provides for the burden of proof for the safety and value of the product to be clearly on the registrant or applicant, which is a big step forward.

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As my colleagues have stated, there is room for a lot of improvement. I say this constructively hoping that when the bill reaches the health committee much improvement will occur and it will be treated in a very constructive manner by the government in addressing the question.

Let us look at the Pest Management Regulatory Agency which licenses and re-evaluates pesticides so they can be sold to the public. No statutory mandate in the legislation is given to the PMRA. All responsibilities and obligations fall on the Minister of Health.

In 1995 the PMRA was established as an administrative branch within Health Canada. We need to create an arm's-length agency. As we recommended, the PMRA should be accountable to parliament. The committee report gives the example of the patent office which is an agency set up within a department but given a full statutory mandate.

The committee also recommended a very clear mission for the PMRA. It recommended that it give absolute priority to the protection of human health and the environment when considering whether to approve a pesticide for use in Canada or allow its continued use. The committee recommended that it promote the use of sustainable pest management strategies that seek to reduce use, risk and reliance on pesticides. It emphasized the development of safer pest control products and to inform and educate the public about pesticides and the risks associated with their use. No such provisions are contained in the law and they are in my view essential.

● (1705)

My colleague from Davenport referred to the precautionary principle and its narrow application to the act. There is no mention of it in the preamble and there is a narrow application in the legislation itself. It is essential that the new act implement the precautionary approach in all aspects of decision making. Mrs. Barbara McElgunn of the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada made the following statement at one of our hearings:

Critical to this issue is the fact that for the majority of priority chemicals or for important new innovations, there exists very little, or no, human health safety data. Many decisions on chemical safety have been taken on very limited toxicological data re their safety to developing organ systems, i.e. children. It takes many years to obtain these data. Under current law and policy in Canada, it takes many more years to develop regulations to protect public health and the environment. Therefore, under the Canadian Perspective on the Precautionary Principle, the health and safety of Canadians is placed in a "Catch-22" situation, that says, "We must have strong scientific evidence before precautionary action can be taken—but we don't have that exact evidence, and therefore we cannot use the precautionary principle to act in a timely and protective manner

This is why we need the precautionary principle which Canada endorsed way back in 1992 at Rio in all facets of this legislation. The definition in the proposed legislation falls short of what the committee recommended and short of international standards. The committee recommended the following clause:

Appropriate preventive measures are to be taken where there is reason to believe that a pesticide is likely to cause harm, even when there is no conclusive evidence to prove a causal relation between the pesticide and its effects.

There is no definition of acceptable or unacceptable risk in the bill. In fact the whole purpose of the bill is to avoid an unacceptable risk. The implementation of the bill would depend on the subjective interpretation of this concept, which is not defined. The precau-

tionary principle is only applied in the proposed legislation in re-evaluation or special reviews. At an operation level the precautionary principle must be used in all decisions respecting pest control products.

There is no requirement to consider aggregate and cumulative exposure. The committee addressed at length that the minister shall consider available information on aggregate and cumulative exposure when determining maximum residue only. That is not sufficient.

There is no science based inherent toxicity criteria, that is, there is no threshold for endocrine destruction, neurotoxicity or carcinogenic content of a pesticide specified for testing of the products. There is no requirement to re-register or evaluate pesticide for use on GMOs.

Another issue that the committee dealt with was an educational mandate. I remember legislation I passed in Quebec, in 1987, where one of the central features was an educational mandate. Without educating the public at large or the people who use pesticides, farmers and others, we will never change attitudes toward pesticides. We had a system where CEGEPs and schools gave instruction on pesticides and changed attitudes in the public mind.

The committee recommended that PMRA be expressly mandated under the new legislation to inform and educate the public about the risks associated with the use of pesticides and the availability of less harmful alternatives. Attitudes about pesticide use must be changed through aggressive public education programs. PMRA should not be given the exclusive responsibility to carry this out given that many federal departments make vital contributions to public awareness raising. It should be spread throughout the system. Public education should be a key mandate of the legislation.

● (1710)

We need a commitment in the bill to the pollution prevention principle. There is no substitution principle included in the bill, that is, a requirement to deregister older pesticides once newer and safer ones are registered.

There is a lack of consideration given in the bill to alternatives, to the essential need to use alternatives when they are available and use them on a fast-track basis. Track 1 toxic substances of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act are not explicitly disallowed, again a breach of committee recommendations.

There is no requirement to obtain information or to evaluate registered formulants and contaminants. There are no requirements either for the establishment of a government-use database or to develop reduction plans. There is no phase-out of cosmetic pesticides as referred to by my colleague from Davenport.

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I will address the question of transparency under the bill. The need to involve Canadians in the decision making process and to inform them about pesticide use in the environment is clearly evident in the amount of attention this issue has garnered in the press and in the public forum for several years now. The key to fostering public confidence in pest management is to develop an open and transparent system. Canada does not have a tradition of allowing the public to act as a watchdog to the extent the U.S. does now. We have many lessons to learn from our American neighbours in enabling public participation in decision making.

That includes access to what we call CBI, confidential business information. Yesterday, the minister stated:

Confidential business information will be defined very narrowly in Bill C-53 and will include only financial information, manufacturing processes and formula ingredients that are not of health or environmental concern. This means that the identity and concentration of formulas that are of health or environmental concern will not be held in confidence and can in fact be made available to the public on labels and material safety data sheets and through the public registry.

That is a good step forward but it falls far short. The restrictions on CBI should be much tighter. For example, there is no definition of what financial information should be protected. Knowing how wily industry is on all these issues it will find a way to make confidential what the public wants to be transparent.

It is my hope that the details of this legislation will be examined closely by the Standing Committee on Health. What constitutes confidential business information is broadly defined in the bill in that the person who is providing the information decides if the information is CBI or not.

Another point regarding transparency is that there is no requirement for a sales database, for which we had asked. There is no direct mechanism for submission of independent scientific findings. We asked for that as well. There is no requirement to establish a database on reported adverse effects. There is no specific mention of the Pest Management Advisory Council. There is no requirement for harmonization between the protection of human health and the environment in order not to weaken Canadian standards.

Nicholas Ashford, a professor of technology and policy at Massachusetts Institute of Technology warned us in 1996 of the most serious environmental problem facing industrialized countries today. He is known for his work on the theory of multiple chemical sensitivity, MCS. He was one of the first to suggest that people who become sensitized by exposure to one form of contamination are much more liable to be affected by a whole range of other pollutants, including detergents, traffic fumes and tobacco smoke. He gave many examples.

● (1715)

Theo Colborn and her colleagues stated that only after DDT had been spread as liberally as talcum powder across the face of this earth did we realize that DDT brought death to wildlife, but in a different way. She added that when concerns emerged about the persistence of DDT and its impact on wildlife, regulators imposed controls on less persistent compounds such as methoxychlor and we now know that the same chemical which is still in wide use disrupts hormones.

We have gone from one pesticide to another, from one chemical to another, producing more millions of chemicals and pesticides all over the world and spreading them all over our earth thinking that each new one is better than the other and we will be safe. Yet we are finding out time and again that what we judge safer this time is found to be toxic and dangerous to human health and the environment, especially for children, seniors and pregnant women.

We owe it to ourselves to accept the bill as a big improvement on the previous legislation, but to also ask the minister constructively to allow the committee on health to look at the improvements we have all suggested and make the bill into leading legislation for the federal government. This is my strong hope.

● (1720)

**Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the comments of the hon. member.

I want to ask the hon. member a question in regard to the legislation. The bill would require manufacturers to show that their chemicals are effective as part of the approval process. The PMRA should perhaps be more concerned about the safety features of the chemical itself. The market will decide the effectiveness. If we need a product we should look at the health safety of the chemical and its use. Would the hon. member not agree that the testing of the effectiveness should be left with the purchasers? They would find out whether or not it was effective.

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln:** Mr. Speaker, I think the precautionary principle has to be the guiding light in all aspects of decision making, including that of the PMRA. If there is any uncertainty it should not be licensed and used. If we are sure, after using the best assessment methods using the benchmark of children, pregnant women and seniors and the safety margin of 10 times, if we are 100% sure that a pesticide is reasonably safe for use in regard to human health and the environment, then it can be licensed, but only after it has been made 100% certain.

Our problem is that in our landscape today there are pesticides being used that have been in use for 40 or 50 years that are completely out of tune with the environment and human health. They have not been retested. We have to start retesting. We must start using the precautionary principle in a proactive and aggressive way. We must tell the PMRA that its mandate is, first of all, human health and the environment and all the rest comes afterwards. If we were to do this then all things would fall into place. This is our hope.

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Matapédia—Matane, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as my colleague from Rosemont—Petite-Patrie mentioned yesterday, I want to say at the outset that the Bloc Québécois will support Bill C-53, an act to protect human health and safety and the environment by regulating products used for the control of pests.

I also want to thank my colleague from Lac-Saint-Louis, who just spoke. He was environment minister in Quebec. In many respects, I agree with what he said, particularly with regard to the number of years that we have been using pesticides and the impact they can have on human health.

We have been using pesticides for many years. We started using chemical pesticides 40 or 50 years ago perhaps. We have very little knowledge of the impact that these pesticides may have had on our lives, on the lives of our children and on the lives of the elderly, as the member pointed out.

He gave a very good example when he mentioned the use of DDT. Everyone will remember that 25 or 30 years ago, DDT was used on a large scale. Researchers found traces of that product in animals in Canada's and Quebec's far north. These animals were still carriers years after the use of DDT, a very common pesticide at one time, had stopped.

I clearly remember that in Quebec, before the introduction of *Bacillus thuringiensis*—which, incidentally, was developed by a Quebecer—highly toxic chemical pesticides were used in our forests to control pests such as the spruce budworm in New Brunswick and in other provinces. There was no real control over the spraying of that pesticide. It was sprayed all over our forests and even over inhabited areas. As a child, I was exposed to these highly toxic products before biological pesticides were developed. It happened in my province as well as in other Canadian provinces. I am sure that many people my age were affected by the chemical products that were used in those days.

So what is the purpose of this bill being introduced? This bill is to replace legislation that dates back to 1969. It is legislation that is now outdated and should have been replaced before now, given the environmental awareness that has developed in recent years, and our awareness of things that have been done and the impact pesticides can have on our lives, on the lives of our children and on our environment.

There is another element that I consider important. I am the Bloc Québécois critic for fisheries and oceans. As such, I am fully aware that chemical pesticides used, which in most cases are not biodegradable, can be found in the environment, in streams and rivers, and ultimately, in the oceans. They can also be found in the food chain.

What are the consequences? Obviously, when fishing in a polluted ocean, the resource is polluted. If you eat what is caught in the ocean, you are ingesting a resource that is highly toxic.

At the present time, we do not know enough about the consequences of using this resource to be 100% reassured about what has taken place until now.

As I was saying, we obviously support Bill C-53 in principle, but we would like to see a number of amendments. We know that the bill will be referred to the Standing Committee on Health.

I will summarize, as my colleague from Rosemont—Petite-Patrie did yesterday, the main amendments to Bill C-53 that the Bloc Québécois hopes to see.

The first amendment that we would like to see stems from the fact that Bill C-53 does nothing to speed up the registration process for less toxic pesticides. A focus group was set up in Quebec by Minister Boisclair last October.

● (1725)

In fact, this group wanted the registration of less toxic pesticides to be speeded up. The reason is quite simple. Currently, non organic pesticides are being used. It would be necessary for the government to invest into research and to foster the registration of less toxic pesticides, particularly organic ones. But it should also be cautious.

The government should foster the speeding up of registration, but in taking the precautionary principle into account, as my colleague from Rosemont—Petite-Patrie mentioned yesterday, and as my colleague from Lac-Saint-Louis said earlier. It seems to me that the precautionary principle is lacking, or at least not present enough in the bill before us. As my colleague from Lac-Saint-Louis mentioned, this is an essential element, and we ask that the bill be changed, amended, improved. This opportunity to amend the bill would allow us, as a society, to have less toxic products that can be used in a much safer environment.

Second, the bill does not suggest any alternatives to current pesticides. As I indicated, we should have alternatives. Of course, the government can ask people to stop using specific pesticides, but it must at least provide alternatives. Alternatives are necessary, not only in terms of biopesticides, but also when it comes to agriculture; reference is made to organic agriculture. Since I represent a rural riding, I know full well that, in the industry, farmers are still using products that may be considered as highly toxic and that it is necessary to have some control on the way these products are used.

There is also another element that is close to my heart. I remember quite well that, in the last 20 or 30 years, when a highly toxic pesticide was banned in more advanced societies like Canada or the United States, the companies manufacturing these products would make them available in the third world. This may not have been taken into account in the bill, but it might be important to do so.

Today it would be necessary to consider that what is going on elsewhere in the world may have an impact on us, on our societies, in the long term. What goes on in the third world can have an important impact. If highly toxic products are used in the third world and end up on our market, then we will have a serious problem in the more or less long term.

*Government Orders*

As I said, this bill proposes no alternatives to the pesticides in current use, as was recommended in their respective reports by the focus group on the use of pesticides in urban areas I have already referred to—and will come back to later—created by the Quebec Minister of the Environment, and the Standing Committee on the Environment of the House of Commons.

In its report, the standing committee even recommended incentives be given for organic agriculture, as I have already mentioned, as well as sustainable pest control strategies. What does this mean? It means developing new approaches to controlling pests and stopping the use of highly toxic products which can be harmful to human health.

For example, as my colleague from Rosemont—Petite-Patrie pointed out yesterday, certain European countries offer financial incentives to encourage growers to eliminate the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, that is chemical fertilizers. Bill C-53 seems to have been completely stripped of any recognition of the importance of research and development of biopesticides.

We can hope that chemical pesticides, pesticides potentially hazardous to human health, will disappear, but there must be alternatives available, and research must be developed and encouraged if the process is to be speeded up.

Another thing that was recommended by the standing committee is for there to be a re-evaluation by the year 2006 of all pesticides that were registered prior to 1995. Once again, the bill seems not to have set a time limit for the re-evaluation of old pesticides. This is an important point.

• (1730)

Basically, even though we have a bill and are trying to replace pesticides said to pose health risks to humans, if we do not re-evaluate the pesticides that are being used, that were used in the past and that are still used today, it is obviously useless to try to go any further.

It is important to consider that we can already, through serious research, come to the conclusion that the pesticides that were in use 20 or 30 years ago—earlier, DDT was mentioned—can be considered as posing health risks to humans. We have a laboratory precisely because these pesticides were used for so many years that we can now evaluate them in a very real and serious fashion. When it comes to evaluating biopesticides, it is the same thing. We are told that it is always a matter of time, that it takes a lot of time to evaluate these products.

There is another important factor to consider in the bill and regarding which amendments are desirable. The bill includes what I would call a wish, in the form of a special protection for children, infants and pregnant women.

I find it hard to see how, through a bill such as this one, we could, without being specific, protect children and infants in a special way, considering that it is society as a whole that is affected by pesticides. In light of this, how can we single out infants, except when they are directly affected in their immediate environment by chemical pesticides or by pesticides that pose health risks?

Earlier, I discussed the position defined by Quebec, by the focus group set up by Minister Boisclair. This position goes much further than the bill before us. On October 15, Minister Boisclair announced the creation of the focus group on the use of pesticides in urban areas. The objective of the focus group was to identify possible solutions that would allow Quebecers to reduce their dependency on and the risks of exposure to these products, including those used to maintain lawns, for environmental horticulture and for extermination purposes, while developing a sense of responsibility among citizens.

A sense of responsibility is very important, and one of the aspects I wish to mention is developing people's sense of responsibility. This is an aspect which is very difficult to control, however. Developing people's sense of responsibility has to do with methods of pesticide use, with people using pesticides in their immediate environment, either on their lawn or on their fruit trees. People often have very little information about how these pesticides should be used. They use them any old way. Sometimes they may very well misuse products and not be aware of their possible hazards. Even if each of these products is very clearly labelled and the recommended use very clearly indicated, not everyone is an expert on pesticides and sometimes amounts can be considerably increased and pose a threat to human health.

Some fifty or so organizations and individuals presented briefs to the group formed by Minister Boisclair. Over half of these organizations, representing municipal government, the research, health and business sectors, and ecological groups, expressed their views during the four days of consultations held in January 2002.

The focus group and the people who presented briefs at the hearings made 15 major recommendations designed to considerably reduce the use of pesticides in urban areas.

But I would like to see this go a bit further than the urban setting. I would like to see rural areas included, because we are well aware that pesticides are also used in farming. They are not restricted to urban areas. They are also used in our towns, our villages and our countryside. I would like to see a broader approach taken and all of society made aware of the problem of using pesticides, which can be potentially dangerous to human health.

• (1735)

The first recommendation of the focus group is to ban pesticides, unless action levels have been reached or the survival of plants is being threatened, as one of my colleagues mentioned earlier.

The group asked that this be done within a quite short deadline. This provision seems to be lacking in the bill. In the bill before us, it seems that the government does not wish to ban the use of pesticides in the more or less long term, among other places in urban centres, as other members have mentioned. These are pesticides that are used only for lawn and park improvement in cities.

*Government Orders*

We will have to raise people's awareness. We will have to raise the awareness of businesses that are using such pesticides. We will have to allow them to have access to organic pesticides and make them aware that the use of specific chemical non biodegradable pesticides may be harmful to human health, even to those who spray them, that is workers in these businesses. Consequently, it seems important to me that the government should try, through an amendment to the bill that will be sent to the Standing Committee on Health, to set a deadline to ensure that the use of potentially harmful chemical pesticides be banned in green spaces and on our lawns.

Other recommendations were made by Minister Boisclair's focus group on the use of pesticides, including environmental management training for those working around the public, such as lawn care businesses, those who sell pesticides, professionals who provide services or those who work in public areas, so they can give advice and set an example. Those who work in public areas include municipal employees.

Public information and education with regard to the risks associated with the use of pesticides, with regard to environmental management and with regard to alternative methods and products must be an important part of the bill. The public must be informed and educated on this issue as quickly as possible so that people become aware that the use of these products can be extremely harmful to their health and, in the long term, to human health and to the environment.

One wish expressed by the focus group, and it is something that I mentioned myself, is that alternative methods using less harmful products be made available. We cannot ask people to stop using pesticides if they do not have access to much less dangerous products that would therefore be less harmful to their health.

The focus group also wanted to see an adequate regulatory framework, including the adoption, in the near future, of a pesticide management code that could accelerate the implementation of environmental management.

Since I am running out of time, I will conclude by saying that we agree with the principle of the bill, but it needs to be amended to give it more teeth because, as it is now, it seems to be nothing more than a paper tiger.

• (1740)

[*English*]

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I have some questions for the hon. member who just spoke. I certainly agree with the intent of the bill. I agree with anything that will ensure pregnant women and children are better protected. All Canadians have that same concern and we certainly want to have a look at it.

My greatest concern with the bill is that the problems in the PMRA, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, have not been dealt with. There is a real lack of requirement for good scientific information to be used. There is much overlap between testing done in the United States and testing done here.

Farmers are probably the widest users of many of these pesticides. They are held at a disadvantage while the PMRA deals with the registration of these products. When good scientific studies have

been done in the United States why is there duplication? It is very expensive. Farmers have to pay an extra tax on these products because they have gone through the PMRA. I have some concerns about that aspect.

I want to ask the member some specific questions about his presentation. He talked about DDT, a product that was banned probably 30 years ago in Canada. Perhaps the member could tell me how long ago it was banned. Nothing to do with human health led to its banning. It was an eggshell problem. Raptors and birds of prey had thin eggshells which resulted in their young not hatching and a decline in the raptor population. If we look across the country now we see a mammoth increase in raptor population. Clearly that problem has been taken care of.

Why would the member raise DDT when it does not seem to fit in with the bill? Maybe he could explain why it would.

Herbicides in particular have become far safer than they were 20 years ago although there was very little evidence that they were not safe at that time. Farmers are more comfortable using these new products because they are extremely safe and have been well tested. That is a real positive.

Who could be more interested than farmers and others who have to use these products when it comes to human health considerations and the environment? No one has a greater vested interest. As a former farmer, my children were around these products. We sprayed crops near our home and had to be very aware of safety.

Would the member comment on that and especially on why DDT was raised as an example of the problem? It was in the past and we have clearly learned from it. Why not mention the new class of herbicides and pesticides that are much safer? The unsafe pesticides are very clearly labelled and someone needs to be licensed to use them.

• (1745)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, but he may have misheard or misunderstood certain things.

I did of course refer to DDT, because that was the example I wanted to use. I wanted to use that very specific example because it is an actual example of the use of a pesticide which had, and which obviously caused, major environmental hazards.

He spoke of the raptors as being affected, but they are not the only ones. In all countries where DDT was used at that time, this highly toxic substance was found throughout the food chain. Of course, it had an impact on human beings. What would that have been? Research could be done today, updating the situation, and then we would perhaps have a better idea.

*Government Orders*

My colleague has raised another point. Today, of course, certain pesticides can be considered less dangerous, less harmful, than at that time, 30 or 40 years ago. Nevertheless, it is often only in the long term that there is an awareness of the potential effects. In the short term, we can say, "Yes, a given pesticide does not seem to be highly toxic". If it is not biodegradable, however, in the long term it can obviously be dangerous. A pesticide that is not biodegradable inevitably ends up in the food chain and inevitably also in our environment.

When my colleague from Lac-Saint-Louis referred just now to the 500% principle of precaution, I am totally in agreement with him. We must have total or near total assurance, if this is possible, that the pesticides we use are not dangerous in the long term to human health and to our environment. One of the points he raised was the very serious problem posed by the use of thousands of tonnes of pesticide products.

I would also like to add, as I did in my speech, that our countries must not stop using highly toxic products, stop manufacturing them, ban their use, and then send them off to the third world, as has been done in the past.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin my speech I want to make a comment on the issue of DDT for the member of the Canadian Alliance who asked the member from the Bloc why he mentioned the issue. I think the issue of DDT is very informative in terms of what we are looking at with regard to the Pest Control Products Act.

First, in 1951 studies indicated issues with regard to human health. If I may share a personal anecdote with the House with regard to DDT, in 1951 my mother was carrying me. I was born in 1952. All members can do the math. I am getting very old now. In 1951, a year before I was born, studies showed that DDT was affecting human health in a negative way. DDT was not banned in Canada until 1978. In January 1978 my daughter was born. Here we have a situation where two generations have been affected by a chemical when it was understood that there were human health problems associated with the use of that chemical.

How does this relate to the Pest Control Products Act, an act that is 30 years out of date? When we talk about the kinds of pesticides and chemicals being used to control pests, yes, as the speaker from the Canadian Alliance said, there has been a new generation of pesticides, but there also is a huge proliferation of pesticides of which we have no understanding and no real knowledge in regard to some of the human health and ecological problems. As well, we have information on pesticides which we are not acting on.

Therefore I am pleased to rise in the House today and speak to this long awaited Bill C-53, the new pest control products act. Indeed, it is an act that many people have been anticipating for a long time. It will amend an act that is 30 years out of date. In May 2000, the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development tabled a report in the House of Commons entitled "Pesticides: Making the Right Choice for the Protection of Health and the Environment". It was the result of a long study of the pesticide regime in Canada, during which the committee heard a great deal of

disturbing testimony about life under the very outdated Pest Control Products Act.

The committee's first recommendation in the report was that the Minister of Health introduce new pesticide legislation as a matter of top priority. Despite the delay, I commend the minister for finally bringing forward Bill C-53. Canadians have been looking forward to the arrival of the bill for a long time.

More important, I congratulate the minister for what is in the bill. On a number of critical issues, the government clearly has listened to the testimony of witnesses and to the recommendations of the committee. The new PCPA strengthens our pesticide regime quite simply by bringing it up to date with modern science, with modern concerns about these products and with modern expectations of government transparency in the protection of human health and the environment.

What is to be applauded about the bill? There are a number of things. To begin, the emphasis of the standing committee's work was on vulnerable populations and, of those, especially children. As we heard over and over from witnesses, children are not little adults. They run a greater risk of exposure to pesticides because of specific characteristics of their physiology. They are developing organisms. For example, they drink more water and breathe more air per kilogram of body weight and thus can absorb larger quantities of pollutants present in the environment. Their diets are appreciably different, consisting largely of fruits, vegetables and mother's milk. They have habits like rolling about on the grass, and little kids like to eat dirt. Because of this, compared to adults, they are exposed to pesticides to a greater degree. For this reason, the committee was greatly concerned that a new pesticides bill grant legal recognition to vulnerable populations, including infants, children, aboriginal people, professional users of pesticides, people in poor health, pregnant women, seniors and others. I am pleased to note that it does.

● (1750)

In addition to recognizing vulnerable populations, the bill would apply margins of safety for protecting them. The U.S. food quality protection act requires the Environmental Protection Agency to use an additional safety factor of 10 when assessing the risks posed by the presence of a pesticide in the diet of children. There is no such legislative requirement in Canada under the current act. For this reason, the committee called for the use of an additional safety factor of 10 in determining the tolerance of pesticide residues in foodstuffs. This recommendation is addressed in the bill. However, I believe it requires clarity and perhaps some amendments to provide that clarity. I hope that the health committee will look at clause 11 very closely.

The bill also calls for a greater margin of safety in using pesticides around schools and homes, which is commendable. During its hearings, the environment committee heard alarming stories about the safety of workers handling pesticides. The committee agreed that such workers need the same level of protection now afforded to workers handling other hazardous substances. For this reason, it recommended that the new legislation ensure that pesticides meet the workplace hazardous materials information system requirements. Although the bill does not specifically mention WHMIS, I am pleased to note that it does include the ministerial requirement that a material safety data sheet for each product be provided to workplaces.

The committee was also greatly concerned about the state of product re-evaluation under the current act. Presently there is no timeframe for re-evaluating pesticide products. Re-evaluation ensures that product registrations are supported by up to date science. Not surprisingly, with no timelines we are far behind in reassessing them. Under Bill C-53 all pesticide products would be re-evaluated every 15 years. Unfortunately, there are no timelines associated with the completion of the process. Again, this is an area that I hope the health committee will address.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that when we continue debate on Bill C-53 I will be able to continue my presentation on these issues.

• (1755)

**The Deputy Speaker:** I want to thank the hon. member for York North for her co-operation. Certainly when this matter is before the House again she will have the floor, with approximately 12 minutes remaining in her intervention.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**AN ACT TO AMEND THE CRIMINAL CODE (CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AND FIREARMS) AND THE FIREARMS ACT**

The House resumed from April 8 consideration of Bill C-15B, an act to amend the Criminal Code (cruelty to animals and firearms) and the Firearms Act, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 5.56 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at report stage of Bill C-15B.

Call in the members.

(The House divided on Motion No. 5, which was negatived on the following division:)

(Division No. 266)

**YEAS**

Members

Abbott	Anders
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bailey
Bellehumeur	Benoit
Bergeron	Borotsik
Breitkreuz	Brien
Brisson	Burton
Cadman	Cardin
Casey	Casson
Chatters	Clark

Cummins  
Desrochers  
Dubé  
Duncan  
Epp  
Forseth  
Gagnon (Québec)  
Gauthier  
Gouk  
Guay  
Hearn  
Hilstrom  
Jaffer  
Keddy (South Shore)  
Laframboise  
Lanctôt  
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)  
Marceau  
Mayfield  
Merrifield  
Pallister  
Penson  
Picard (Drummond)  
Rajotte  
Reynolds  
Rocheleau  
Sauvageau  
Skelton  
Sorenson  
St-Hilaire  
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)  
Toews  
Wayne  
White (North Vancouver)  
Yelich — 89

*Government Orders*

Dalphond-Guiral  
Doyle  
Duceppe  
Elley  
Fitzpatrick  
Fournier  
Gallant  
Girard-Bujold  
Grewal  
Guimond  
Hill (Macleod)  
Hinton  
Johnston  
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)  
Lalonde  
Lebel  
MacKay (Picou—Antigonish—Guysborough)  
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)  
Ménard  
Mills (Red Deer)  
Paquette  
Perron  
Plamondon  
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)  
Ritz  
Roy  
Schmidt  
Solberg  
Spencer  
Stinson  
Thompson (Wild Rose)  
Vellacott  
White (Langley—Abbotsford)  
Williams

**NAYS**

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allard	Anderson (Victoria)
Assad	Assadourian
Bagnell	Barnes
Beaumier	Bennett
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Binet	Blaikie
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Boudria	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Caccia
Calder	Cannis
Caplan	Carroll
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Coderre
Collenette	Comartin
Copps	Cotler
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies	Desjarlais
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Dromisky
Drouin	Duplain
Easter	Eggleton
Eyking	Farrah
Finlay	Folco
Fontana	Fry
Galloway	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Graham	Grose
Guarnieri	Harb
Harvard	Harvey
Hubbard	Ianno
Jennings	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Keys
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Lastewka
LeBlanc	Lee
Leung	Lill
Lincoln	Longfield
MacAulay	Macklin
Mahoney	Malhi
Manley	Marcil
Marleau	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)

*Government Orders*

Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	McCallum
McCormick	McDonough
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	McTeague
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Nault
Neville	Nystrom
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Pagtakhan	Patry
Peric	Peschisolido
Peterson	Pettigrew
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pratt
Price	Proulx
Redman	Regan
Richardson	Robillard
Robinson	Saada
Savoy	Scherrer
Scott	Shepherd
St-Jacques	St-Julien
St. Denis	Stoffer
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibault (West Nova)	Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tirabassi	Tonks
Torsney	Ur
Valeri	Volpe
Wappel	Wasylycia-Leis
Whelan	Wilfert

**PAIRED**

## Members

Asselin	Bellemare
Bradshaw	Crête
Gagnon (Champlain)	Jackson
Loubier	Maloney
Myers	Owen
Rock	Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)	Venne — 14

• (1825)

[*English*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare Motion No. 5 lost.

[*Translation*]

The next question is on Motion No. 7.

[*English*]

**Ms. Marlene Catterall:** Mr. Speaker, I think if you would seek it you would find unanimous consent in the House to apply the vote just taken to Motions Nos. 7 and 8.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Dale Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, Canadian Alliance members will be voting yea on Motions Nos. 7 and 8.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Brien:** Mr. Speaker, members of the Bloc Quebecois will be voting in favour of Motions Nos. 7 and 8.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Speaker, members of the NDP will be voting no on this motion.

**Mr. André Bachand:** Mr. Speaker, members of the Progressive Conservative Party who are present will be voting yes on this motion.

(The House divided on Motion No. 7, which was negated on the following division:)

*(Division No. 267)***YEAS**

## Members

Abbott	Anders
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bailey
Bellehumeur	Benoit
Bergeron	Borotsik
Breitreuz	Brien
Brison	Burton
Cadman	Cardin
Casey	Casson
Chatters	Clark
Cummins	Dalphond-Guiral
Desrochers	Doyle
Dubé	Duceppe
Duncan	Elley
Epp	Fitzpatrick
Forseth	Fournier
Gagnon (Québec)	Gallant
Gauthier	Girard-Bujold
Gouk	Grewal
Guay	Guimond
Hearn	Hill (Macleod)
Hilstrom	Hinton
Jaffer	Johnston
Keddy (South Shore)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Laframboise	Lalonde
Lancôt	Lebel
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Marceau	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Mayfield	Ménard
Merrifield	Mills (Red Deer)
Pallister	Paquette
Penson	Perron
Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
Rajotte	Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Reynolds	Ritz
Rocheleau	Roy
Sauvageau	Schmidt
Skelton	Solberg
Sorenson	Spencer
St-Hilaire	Stinson
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews	Vellacott
Wayne	White (Langley—Abbotsford)
White (North Vancouver)	Williams
Yelich — 89	

**NAYS**

## Members

Adams	Alcock
Allard	Anderson (Victoria)
Assad	Assadourian
Bagnell	Barnes
Beaumier	Bennett
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Binet	Blaikie
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Boudria	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Caccia
Calder	Cannis
Caplan	Carroll
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Coderre
Collette	Comartin
Copps	Cotler
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies	Desjarlais
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Dromisky
Drouin	Duplain
Easter	Eggleton
Eyking	Farrah
Finlay	Folco
Fontana	Fry
Galloway	Godfrey

Godin  
Graham  
Guarnieri  
Harvard  
Hubbard  
Jennings  
Karetak-Lindell  
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)  
Kraft Sloan  
LeBlanc  
Leung  
Lincoln  
MacAulay  
Mahoney  
Manley  
Marleau  
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)  
McCormick  
McGuire  
McLellan  
Minna  
Murphy  
Neville  
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)  
Pagtakhan  
Peric  
Peterson  
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)  
Price  
Redman  
Richardson  
Robinson  
Savoy  
Scott  
St-Jacques  
St. Denis  
Szabo  
Thibault (West Nova)  
Tirabassi  
Torsney  
Valeri  
Wappel  
Whelan  
Wood— 143

Goodale  
Grose  
Harb  
Harvey  
Ianno  
Jordan  
Keyes  
Knutson  
Lastewka  
Lee  
Lill  
Longfield  
Macklin  
Malhi  
Marcil  
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)  
McCallum  
McDonough  
McKay (Scarborough East)  
McTeague  
Mitchell  
Nault  
Nystrom  
O'Reilly  
Patry  
Peschisolido  
Pettigrew  
Pratt  
Proulx  
Regan  
Robillard  
Saada  
Scherrer  
Shepherd  
St-Julien  
Stoffer  
Telegdi  
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)  
Tonks  
Ur  
Volpe  
Wasylycia-Leis  
Wilfert

**PAIRED**

## Members

Asselin	Bellemare
Bradshaw	Crête
Gagnon (Champlain)	Jackson
Loubier	Maloney
Myers	Owen
Rock	Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)	Venne— 14

(The House divided on Motion No. 8, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 268)

**YEAS**

## Members

Abbott	Anders
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bailey
Bellehumeur	Benoit
Bergeron	Borotsik
Breitkreuz	Brien
Brison	Burton
Cadman	Cardin
Casey	Casson
Chatters	Clark
Cummins	Dalphond-Guiral
Desrochers	Doyle
Dubé	Duceppe
Duncan	Elley
Epp	Fitzpatrick
Forseth	Fournier
Gagnon (Québec)	Gallant
Gauthier	Girard-Bujold

*Government Orders*

Gouk  
Guay  
Hearn  
Hilstrom  
Jaffer  
Keddy (South Shore)  
Laframboise  
Lancôt  
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)  
Marceau  
Mayfield  
Merrifield  
Pallister  
Penson  
Picard (Drummond)  
Rajotte  
Reynolds  
Rocheleau  
Sauvageau  
Skelton  
Sorenson  
St-Hilaire  
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)  
Toews  
Wayne  
White (North Vancouver)  
Yelich— 89

Grewal  
Guimond  
Hill (Macleod)  
Hinton  
Johnston  
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)  
Lalonde  
Lebel  
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)  
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)  
Ménard  
Mills (Red Deer)  
Paquette  
Perron  
Plamondon  
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)  
Ritz  
Roy  
Schmidt  
Solberg  
Spencer  
Stinson  
Thompson (Wild Rose)  
Vellacott  
White (Langley—Abbotsford)  
Williams

**NAYS**

## Members

Alcock  
Anderson (Victoria)  
Assadourian  
Barnes  
Bennett  
Bevilacqua  
Blaikie  
Bonin  
Brown  
Bulte  
Caccia  
Cannis  
Carroll  
Catterall  
Chamberlain  
Coderre  
Comartin  
Cotler  
Cuzner  
Desjarlais  
Dhaliwal  
Dromisky  
Duplain  
Eggleton  
Farrah  
Folco  
Fry  
Godfrey  
Goodale  
Grose  
Harb  
Harvey  
Ianno  
Jordan  
Keyes  
Knutson  
Lastewka  
Lee  
Lill  
Longfield  
Macklin  
Malhi  
Marcil  
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)  
McCallum  
McDonough  
McKay (Scarborough East)  
McTeague  
Mitchell  
Nault  
Nystrom  
O'Reilly

*Government Orders*

Pagtakhan  
Peric  
Peterson  
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)  
Price  
Redman  
Richardson  
Robinson  
Savoy  
Scott  
St-Jacques  
St. Denis  
Szabo  
Thibault (West Nova)  
Tirabassi  
Torsney  
Valeri  
Wappel  
Whelan  
Wood— 143

Patry  
Peschisolido  
Pettigrew  
Pratt  
Proulx  
Regan  
Robillard  
Saada  
Scherrer  
Shepherd  
St-Julien  
Stoffer  
Telegdi  
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)  
Tonks  
Ur  
Volpe  
Wasylcia-Leis  
Wilfert

Cadman  
Casson  
Clark  
Doyle  
Elley  
Fitzpatrick  
Gallant  
Grewal  
Hill (Macleod)  
Hinton  
Johnston  
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)  
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)  
Mayfield  
Mills (Red Deer)  
Penson  
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)  
Ritz  
Skelton  
Sorenson  
Stinson  
Thompson (Wild Rose)  
Vellacott  
White (Langley—Abbotsford)  
Williams

Casey  
Chatters  
Cummins  
Duncan  
Epp  
Forseth  
Gouk  
Hearn  
Hilstrom  
Jaffer  
Keddy (South Shore)  
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)  
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)  
Merrifield  
Pallister  
Rajotte  
Reynolds  
Schmidt  
Solberg  
Spencer  
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)  
Toews  
Wayne  
White (North Vancouver)  
Yelich— 60

**PAIRED**

## Members

Asselin  
Bradshaw  
Gagnon (Champlain)  
Loubier  
Myers  
Rock  
Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)

Bellemare  
Crête  
Jackson  
Maloney  
Owen  
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)  
Venne— 14

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare Motions Nos. 7 and 8 lost.

[*English*]

The next question is on Motion No. 9.

**Ms. Marlene Catterall:** Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find consent that those who voted on the previous motion be recorded as voting on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting no.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed that we proceed in such a fashion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Dale Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, Canadian Alliance members will be voting yea on this motion.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Brien:** Mr. Speaker, members of the Bloc Quebecois will be voting no on this motion.

[*English*]

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Speaker, members of the NDP will be voting no on this motion.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. André Bachand:** Mr. Speaker, members of the Progressive Conservative Party will be voting yes on this motion.

(The House divided on Motion No. 9, which was negated on the following division:)

*(Division No. 269)***YEAS**

## Members

Abbott  
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)  
Bailey  
Borotsik  
Brison

Anders  
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)  
Benoit  
Breitkreuz  
Burton

Adams  
Allard  
Assad  
Bachand (Saint-Jean)  
Barnes  
Bellehumeur  
Bergeron  
Bevilacqua  
Blaikie  
Bonin  
Brien  
Bryden  
Byrne  
Calder  
Caplan  
Carroll  
Catterall  
Chamberlain  
Coderre  
Comartin  
Cotler  
Cuzner  
Davies  
Desrochers  
Dhaliwal  
Dromisky  
Dubé  
Duplain  
Eggleton  
Farrah  
Folco  
Fournier  
Gagnon (Québec)  
Gauthier  
Godfrey  
Goodale  
Grose  
Guay  
Harb  
Harvey  
Ianno  
Jordan  
Keys  
Knutson  
Laframboise  
Lancôt  
Lebel  
Lee  
Lill  
Longfield  
Macklin  
Malhi  
Marceau  
Marleau

**NAYS**

## Members

Alcock  
Anderson (Victoria)  
Assadourian  
Bagnell  
Beaumier  
Bennett  
Bertrand  
Binet  
Blondin-Andrew  
Boudria  
Brown  
Bulte  
Caccia  
Cannis  
Cardin  
Castonguay  
Cauchon  
Charbonneau  
Collenette  
Copps  
Cullen  
Dalphond-Guiral  
Desjarlais  
DeVillers  
Dion  
Drouin  
Duceppe  
Easter  
Eyking  
Finlay  
Fontana  
Fry  
Galloway  
Girard-Bujold  
Godin  
Graham  
Guarnieri  
Guimond  
Harvard  
Hubbard  
Jennings  
Karetak-Lindell  
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)  
Kraft Sloan  
Lalonde  
Lastewka  
LeBlanc  
Leung  
Lincoln  
MacAulay  
Mahoney  
Manley  
Marcil  
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)

*Government Orders*

Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	McCallum
McCormick	McDonough
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	McTeague
Ménard	Minna
Mitchell	Murphy
Nault	Neville
Nystrom	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan
Paquette	Patry
Peric	Perron
Peschisolido	Peterson
Pettigrew	Picard (Drummond)
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Plamondon
Pratt	Price
Proulx	Redman
Regan	Richardson
Robillard	Robinson
Rocheleau	Roy
Saada	Sauvageau
Savoy	Scherrer
Scott	Shepherd
St-Hilaire	St-Jacques
St-Julien	St. Denis
Stoffer	Szabo
Telegdi	Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Tirabassi
Tonks	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Volpe	Wappel
Wasylcia-Leis	Whelan
Wilfert	Wood— 172

**PAIRED**

## Members

Asselin	Bellemare
Bradshaw	Crête
Gagnon (Champlain)	Jackson
Loubier	Maloney
Myers	Owen
Rock	Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)	Venne— 14

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare Motion No. 9 lost.

**Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in at report stage with a further amendment.

[*English*]

**Ms. Marlene Catterall:** Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find unanimous consent in the House to apply the vote taken on Motions Nos. 5, 7 and 8 in reverse to the concurrence motion. The member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex wishes to abstain on this vote.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed to proceed in such a fashion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Dale Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Alliance will be voting nay on this motion.

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Brien:** Mr. Speaker, members of the Bloc Québécois will be voting no on this motion.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Speaker, members of the NDP will be voting yes on this motion.

**Mr. André Bachand:** Mr. Speaker, Progressive Conservative members will be voting no on this motion.

[*English*]

**Mr. Paul Steckle:** Mr. Speaker, I would like it to be known that I will be voting no on this motion.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 270*)

**YEAS**

## Members

Adams	Alcock
Allard	Anderson (Victoria)
Assad	Assadourian
Bagnell	Barnes
Beaumier	Bennett
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Binet	Blaikie
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Boudria	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Caccia
Calder	Canniss
Caplan	Carroll
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Coderre
Collenette	Comartin
Copps	Cotler
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies	Desjarlais
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Dromisky
Drouin	Duplain
Easter	Eggleton
Eyking	Farrah
Finlay	Folco
Fontana	Fry
Galloway	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Graham	Grose
Guarnieri	Harb
Harvard	Harvey
Hubbard	Ianno
Jennings	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Lastewka
LeBlanc	Lee
Leung	Lill
Lincoln	Longfield
MacAulay	Macklin
Mahoney	Malhi
Manley	Marcil
Marleau	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	McCallum
McCormick	McDonough
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	McTeague
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Nault
Neville	Nystrom
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Pagtakhan	Patry
Peric	Peschisolido
Peterson	Pettigrew
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pratt
Price	Proulx
Redman	Regan
Richardson	Robillard
Robinson	Saada
Savoy	Scherrer
Scott	Shepherd
St-Jacques	St-Julien
St. Denis	Stoffer
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibault (West Nova)	Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tirabassi	Tonks
Torsney	Valeri
Volpe	Wappel

*Private Members' Business*

Wasylycia-Leis  
Wilfert

Whelan  
Wood— 142

## NAYS

## Members

Abbott  
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)  
Bachand (Saint-Jean)  
Bellehumeur  
Bergeron  
Breitkreuz  
Brisson  
Cadman  
Casey  
Chatters  
Cummins  
Desrochers  
Dubé  
Duncan  
Epp  
Forseth  
Gagnon (Québec)  
Gauthier  
Gouk  
Guay  
Hearn  
Hilstrom  
Jaffer  
Keddy (South Shore)  
Laframboise  
Lancôt  
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)  
Marceau  
Mayfield  
Merrifield  
Pallister  
Penson  
Picard (Drummond)  
Rajotte  
Reynolds  
Rocheleau  
Sauvageau  
Skelton  
Sorenson  
St-Hilaire  
Stinson  
Thompson (Wild Rose)  
Vellacott  
White (Langley—Abbotsford)  
Williams

Anders  
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)  
Bailey  
Benoit  
Borotsik  
Brien  
Burton  
Cardin  
Casson  
Clark  
Dalphon-Guiral  
Doyle  
Duceppe  
Elley  
Fitzpatrick  
Fournier  
Gallant  
Girard-Bujold  
Grewal  
Guimond  
Hill (Macleod)  
Hinton  
Johnston  
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)  
Lalonde  
Lebel  
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)  
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)  
Ménard  
Mills (Red Deer)  
Paquette  
Perron  
Plamondon  
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)  
Ritz  
Roy  
Schmidt  
Solberg  
Spencer  
Steckle  
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)  
Toews  
Wayne  
White (North Vancouver)  
Yelich— 90

## PAIRED

## Members

Asselin  
Bradshaw  
Gagnon (Champlain)  
Loubier  
Myers  
Rock  
Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)

Bellemare  
Crête  
Jackson  
Maloney  
Owen  
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)  
Venne— 14

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

I would like to ask for the co-operation of all members. We have an important emergency debate this evening following private members' business so I hope that we can proceed as quickly as possible to private members' business.

It being 6.32 p.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

## STATISTICS ACT

**Mr. Murray Calder (Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-312, an act to amend the Statistics Act and the National Archives of Canada Act (census records), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to have the chance to debate Bill C-312. The bill aims to give researchers access to historic census records after 92 years.

At first glance one might think this is a very obscure matter, yet since I introduced the bill just over a year ago, my office has received petitions signed by more than 14,000 Canadians who call for the release of historic census records. If petitions received before the election are counted, then I have heard from more than 20,000 Canadians on this issue. A similar number of petitions have been received in the other place where there is an identical bill, S-12, coming up for third reading. Some hon. colleagues tell me that they have received more letters and e-mails on the historical census than any other issue.

With that much interest in the bill, it is very unfortunate it has not been deemed votable. I will be seeking the unanimous consent of the House to rectify this oversight and make C-312 votable. I hope all hon. members will agree that any matter resulting in over 20,000 names on petitions is of considerable public concern and should be put to a democratic vote in the House whether or not the members support the bill itself.

Why is there such an interest in this issue? There is an estimated 7.5 million Canadians engaged in genealogy. Tracing one's family roots is one of Canada's most popular hobbies. For some, the Mormons for example, genealogical research is of religious importance.

The census is the only historic record that provides the information about family units rather than just individuals. It paints a portrait of Canada in a previous age, so it is a valuable tool to historians. It has been used to establish legal rights such as first nations treaty rights. Medical researchers have used the census to establish family relationships, a vital piece of information when studying genetically inherited diseases.

The census records up to and including the 1901 census are available to all Canadians on microfilm through the national archives and at many libraries and regional archives across Canada. In order to protect the privacy of living Canadians, census records have traditionally been kept confidential for 92 years before their public release. In fact this 92 year rule is actually spelled out in the regulations accompanying the Privacy Act which states under section 6(d) that the archives may disclose information for research or statistical purposes "in cases where the information was obtained through the taking of a census or survey, and 92 years have elapsed following the census or survey containing the information".

*Private Members' Business*

In other words, the 92 year rule proposed by Bill C-312 already has a basis in Canadian law for the censuses. There is nothing new about providing access to census records. There has never been a complaint about records up to and including the 1901 census being made available to the public. In fact Newfoundlanders already have access to much more recent censuses taken before the province joined confederation.

Why then is Bill C-312 even necessary? That is a very good question and one that has challenged legal minds.

I am a chicken farmer and not a lawyer, but here is one explanation. Statistics Canada has refused to turn over the National Archives records from the 1906 western Canadian census and the 1911 and other censuses. This is despite requests from the National Archives of Canada. As I said, I am a farmer, not a lawyer, but lawyers tell me that Statistics Canada is required by the National Archives of Canada to turn over such historically significant records to the archives. The archives then can release them to the public under existing legislation.

● (1835)

It is not just any lawyer saying this. In a confidential legal opinion from August 2000 a senior counsel at the Department of Justice, Ann Chaplin, concluded the following:

—the better view seems to be that the National Archivist has the authority to release pre-1918 census documents without seeking any legislative change.

She goes on to say however that the matter is not free from doubt for records after 1918 as a result of the Statistics Act passed that year. She suggests a minor legislative change for clarity. She also argues that there was no intention in the 1918 Statistics Act to change the previous policy on eventual release of records through the archives.

Why then Bill C-312? Given the intransigence of Statistics Canada on this matter, there needs to be legislative clarity. There has also been a concern raised about the privacy of individuals whose names appear in the census. Bill C-312 seeks to address that concern. It would allow an individual to object in writing to the release of information that would invade his or her privacy. In short, the bill is a compromise between the rights of Canadian researchers to have access to this historical treasure trove and the rights of individuals to protect their privacy.

The confidential legal opinion from justice is not the only word on this matter either. In 1999-2000 an expert panel consisting of respected academics and jurists studied the historic census question in depth at the request of the former minister of industry by the way. Its report was finally released in December 2000 after access to information requests. Obviously its recommendations were not to the liking of Statistics Canada. The report was clear in calling for the release of the historic census records. Most important, it unequivocally rejected the claim of Statistics Canada that there ever was a guarantee that census records would be kept confidential in perpetuity.

We have heard a lot from Statistics Canada about the so-called Laurier promise, but despite further access to information requests, it has not produced a shred of evidence of such a commitment to perpetual confidentiality.

Was there a broken promise? Yes, there was, but it is not the one to which Statistics Canada refers. The broken promise is the one contained in the census instructions of 1911 and other years that followed. It state:

The census is intended to be a permanent record and its schedules will be stored in the Archives of the Dominion.

There is the promise. That is the promise that has been broken by a stubborn Statistics Canada bureaucracy that has overstepped its authority and has taken on responsibility that properly belongs to the National Archives of Canada. It is for the archives to determine what is historic information and whether it can or cannot be released to the general public in accordance with any existing laws such as the Privacy Act. That has never been the role Statistics Canada.

The recommendations of the expert panel and the Department of Justice confidential legal opinion were still not enough to convince Statistics Canada to do what was required of it by law. Instead, it stonewalled and delayed again and again. This time it engaged the polling firm of Environics to conduct town halls and focus groups across Canada this past December and January. I have nothing against public consultation, but there already was extensive public consultation by the expert panel. Do we keep asking the question until we get the answer that we want? Is that what it is trying to do?

Opinion at Environics town halls was overwhelmingly in support of the public release of historic census records. Only a handful of people spoke against release and from what we can tell, these people were specifically invited to attend to present an opposing view. Even they, in at least one case, admitted that there was no confidentiality commitments made with respect to the 1906 and the 1911 censuses that should prevent their release

● (1840)

Surely there have been enough studies and consultations on this matter that we do not need any further delays. Historical and legal aspects have been extensively addressed, public consultations have also been extensive, and in the House in September 2000 a motion expressed clearly that the 1911 records should be released. That was a motion from the House of Commons of Canada, and Statistics Canada is still ignoring that.

Britain recently posted its 1901 census data on the Internet and the servers crashed due to the excessive demand. In the United States censuses are released after 72 years. In other countries that also make this information available there is no evidence of non co-operation with censuses as a result of that nor of public complaints.

*Private Members' Business*

To me it is inconceivable that census instructions in the early 1900s would have stated so clearly that the census was intended to be a permanent record and its schedule stored in the archives of the Dominion. If that was not intended, if the permanent confidentiality were intended, surely instructions would have been ordered to destroy the records. Destruction was never specified in census instructions or legislation. Actually it would be an act of vandalism against this Canadian historic treasure if the destruction was carried out.

The National Archives of Canada Act and the regulations of the Privacy Act already specify that historic census records should be turned over to the archives and released to the public after 92 years. That is already law.

As some suggest, this is not a case of retroactive legislation. Bill C-312 provides a mechanism for the orderly transfer of historic census records from Statistics Canada to the national archives. It removes the ambiguity by which Statistics Canada has withheld this historic treasure from the Canadian people. Most important, by allowing individuals to object to the release of their personal information it responds to concerns about provincial privacy. No doubt everyone here has heard from Canadians inside and outside their constituencies about how important this bill is to their efforts to connect to the pasts of their families.

With this amount of interest, I would urge that this House agree to the unanimous consent to make Bill C-312 votable and I urge all members to support it.

• (1845)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Is there unanimous consent to make this a votable item?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** No.

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe the heavy-hand of the government whip coming down on a Liberal member like that. What a shame, particularly given the fact that the bill follows in the spirit of a motion, Motion No. 160, which I introduced in the last parliament and which was passed in September 2000, as the previous member just referenced.

The motion which I introduced in the House said that:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should take all necessary steps to release the 1911 census records once they have been deposited in the National Archives in 2003.

My motion two years ago had very broad support. It was quite evident that once it had been granted votable status that it was likely to pass. The government managed to get its member from Ottawa Centre to introduce a disingenuous amendment to my motion which the government voted for more or less on a party line. I believe the then minister of industry, the now Deputy Prime Minister, seemed to have been consistently protecting the bureaucrats at Statistics Canada in their intransigence in this matter.

The member for Ottawa Centre for some reason opted to gut this motion with broad support so that instead of reading "in the opinion of this House the government should take all necessary steps to

release the 1911 census records", it ended up reading "that in the opinion of this House, the government should consider releasing the 1911 census records". I wish that the directive to the executive to release that census data was as clear and unequivocal as my Ottawa friend opposite suggests. Regrettably what we saw in September 2000 was the minister of industry intervening in the legislative process of a private member's bill, which was supposedly non-partisan, to water down the intent of Motion No. 160.

I am glad to see there is a member opposite who has introduced a thoughtful bill which is frankly a more comprehensive means of addressing the problem of non-disclosure of the census data according to the 92 year rule than did my motion. My motion simply addressed the year 1911. It was a small targeted effort to allow the House to speak to the matter and it did so. However, this bill is more comprehensive and it would solve the problem permanently. For that reason, I strongly support it and urge all my colleagues to do the same.

However, while I commend my friend opposite for his effort, on behalf of genealogists, family researchers, historians and archivists, I really must question his diagnosis of the problem. He continually referred to the intransigence of Statistics Canada bureaucrats, but the last time I checked Statistics Canada was an agency of the executive branch of the government. Under the aegis of a statute passed by this parliament, it reports through this parliament to the Minister of Industry.

I hope that my friend opposite and colleagues who feel like me will use every tool at their disposal to persuade the Minister of Industry to cause the officials at Statistics Canada to heed the rule of parliament, as expressed in the vote on my motion in September 2000, and to follow the rule of law. As the member opposite has clearly demonstrated, there is no compelling legal barrier to the release of the census data. Those who have investigated this matter have found that there is absolutely no evidence that the people of Canada were told about a promise of confidentiality that the census would last forever.

Until quite recently, there seems to be a new invention of Statistics Canada. The member's Bill C-312 provides for particular protection for privacy. I think the Privacy Act would apply.

• (1850)

Most importantly, let us apply common sense to the issue as other jurisdictions throughout the world have done. When the government compels people to furnish it with information on penalty of violating the law it is entirely reasonable and just for such citizens to expect a real degree of confidentiality in the information for the term of their natural lives.

The information we are talking about in the 1911 census is basic information. It does not have a bearing on people's privacy. It consists of the names of people and their spouses, how many children they had, their occupation and where they lived. It is this sort of basic information and in some instances a little more. However it is absolutely critical to conducting the practice of history in Canada, a country which unfortunately is losing its sense of history.

*Private Members' Business*

We are not seeking to reveal the personal habits, behaviours or deep personal secrets of our great grandparents. We are asking on behalf of tens of thousands of Canadian archivists, historians and genealogical researchers to have access to basic information.

Once again, I strongly support Bill C-312 and encourage all members to do the same. However as we have seen in the government's response to my Motion No. 160, even if the House were to speak to the matter, even if the hon. member opposite were to obtain consent to make the bill votable as he did from this side, and even if the vote approved the bill and it became law, I am not sure the government would act.

The House has expressed its views on the matter. It did so more than two years ago and the government has done precisely nothing. The Minister of Industry has set up more committees to review the matter. Reports have come back and more time has passed. We have seen an endless stream of procrastination.

While I commend the bill and this legislative effort a lot of hon. members get heat from constituents who want to open census records. The members say they will support the private member's bill or have voted for the motion and then ask to be left alone.

That is not good enough, particularly for members on the government side. They need to button down the Minister of Industry and demand that he bring to heel the bureaucrats at Statistics Canada who have so far refused to allow for an appropriate, just, common law settlement to the problem.

I hope all members will make the bill votable. I hope it will pass. I hope the executive branch will act in a way it failed to act following passage of a similar motion in the last parliament.

• (1855)

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** I have before me a long list of members who wish to speak. I would appeal to the generosity of the next speakers to give a minute of two of their time to one or two of their colleagues in order to allow them to speak, if they do not mind. However, it is entirely up to their discretion.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I too am pleased to take part in this debate which is, really, a debate about social values.

This is about the social values surrounding the possibility of investigating our past, of tracing our history as precisely as possible on the one hand, and on the other, the very modern value of respecting privacy. These two ideas clash. This is a debate that has already been taking place for a number of years in Canada, and I will come back to this later.

Let us look at Bill C-312 for a moment. The summary of the bill stipulates the following:

This enactment expressly authorizes the transfer of all census records from Statistics Canada to the National Archives of Canada for permanent safekeeping. It gives access to the records to genealogists and other researchers 92 years after the census, subject to a privacy right it creates that allows individuals to object to the disclosure of personal information in the census records.

The previous speaker made reference to the fact that he introduced a motion in the House two years ago, Motion M-160 if I am not mistaken, which was amended, and which was as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should take all necessary steps to release the 1911 census records once they have been deposited in the National Archives in 2003.

Unfortunately, this motion was not implemented in the way we would have liked following its adoption in the House. That having been said, the reason was probably something to do with this debate on social values to which I referred and which was going on.

It is important to point out that on November 5, 1999, the then Minister of Industry, the current Deputy Prime Minister, formed a committee of experts with the mandate to examine access to historic census records and to submit a report on the legal and privacy repercussions of releasing census records.

The committee was to examine Canadians' views on the advisability of continuing to protect information and determine the options for making this kind of information available to the public. The committee consisted of eminent academics and a retired supreme court judge. It received over 2,500 opinions, briefs, letters and pieces of correspondence and the work went on for several months, approximately seven in fact.

One of the recommendations the committee made in its report was that the public be allowed access? to all past, present and future census records 92 years after the data are collected.

On December 15, 2000, the then Minister of Industry, Mr. Tobin, released the committee's report, indicating that since this study and the issues involved were very complex, there should be a second more intensive study, given the broad ramifications, and new public consultations.

Environics was the group selected to carry out the consultations seeking public opinion on the release of post-1901 information. These public consultations were held throughout Quebec and Canada from December 14, 2001 to January 30, 2002. The public report, which was submitted to Statistics Canada on February 15, contained 11 records of proceedings following the various meetings held by Envionics.

Clearly, the debate is still ongoing. The conclusions are not final, and our colleague has presented Bill C-312 which, I must say, takes care to establish a certain number of safeguards for use by citizens who fear that personal and confidential information might be released. There are a number of arguments in favour of releasing data from the various censuses.

• (1900)

Should we decide to go this route, we would have to make sure that this possibility—the fact that in 92 years this information will become public—is mentioned on census forms, so that citizens are fully aware of how the information they provide in a census will be treated.

*Private Members' Business*

It is assumed that 92 years later, a large number of those who provided information in a census will unfortunately no longer be around. Therefore, they could not personally be answerable for the information they provided 92 years earlier.

Bill C-312 also specifies that only genealogists and duly authorized researchers would have access to these documents. It must be understood that these documents would not be accessible for public consultation. They would only be available to experts whose job it is to describe how society evolves and the major changes that affect it. For genealogists and historians, the historical information contained in the various censuses is truly invaluable.

Incidentally, a number of western democracies, including the United States and the United Kingdom, already have legislation allowing for the disclosure of confidential information after a certain number of years. In the case of the United States, it is 72 years after a census, while in the United Kingdom, it is 100 years. The hon. member's bill provides for a 92 year period, which seems perfectly reasonable under the circumstances.

As I indicated, the bill proposed by the hon. member includes a number of safeguards. For example, an individual who does not want the information he provides in a census to eventually become public could prevent this from happening 92 years later. Some might claim that the bill includes enough safeguards to go ahead without compromising an individual's ability to defend and protect personal information.

Now let us look at the arguments against this bill. Of course, there is the fact that the confidentiality of census information has been entrenched in Canadian legislation since 1911. This means that an individual may have died with the conviction that the information that he or she provided during a census would never be made public. Obviously, that individual would not expect, a few years after his or her death, that parliament would revisit the issue and decide to release the information that individual thought would never be made public.

It is also a problem because filling out census questionnaires has become mandatory. There are penalties for those who fail to do so. What then will the information given on these census questionnaires be worth, if the respondent knows that information he or she wanted to keep confidential will be made public one day?

Let us not forget the fact that the privacy commissioner has expressed serious reservations with regard to the possibility of releasing census information that is considered confidential.

As we can see, that are relevant and legitimate arguments to be made both in favour and against the release of personal information. For those in favour of this bill, it would be logical to think that general information only, and not specifically personal information, would be made public.

• (1905)

However, there are some serious reservations. We must take into account these reservations and these legitimate concerns expressed by people who are worried that personal information they provided could be released in the future.

[*English*]

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent of the House to make Bill C-312 votable.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Is there unanimous consent to make this a votable item?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to tell my colleague from Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey that I tried.

We in the New Democratic Party thank the former industry minister for setting the task force forward to come up with recommendations for the government to provide legislation to release the census of 1911.

We want to make it clear for the record that people note that in the bill itself, which the member has provided, information is not automatically transferred to the archives. People can object to the transfer of their own information before 92 years are up allowing any information to remain confidential if they so wish.

We in the New Democratic Party believe it is time to support the panel report, call for the government to bring in legislation allowing the release of census information to the archives after 92 years for genealogical research.

I thank the hon. member for bringing this timely subject to the House for debate. I received many calls asking that the census be released. I find it unfortunate that we cannot have unanimous consent on such a worthwhile bill but I thank the hon. member for bringing it to the attention of the House.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Serge Marciel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to address Bill C-312, an act to amend the Statistics Act to authorize the transfer of census records from Statistics Canada to the National Archives, so that these records can be made available to the public 92 years after a census.

I am convinced that we all agree that the reasons for which genealogists, historians and researchers wish to have access to historical records are legitimate and important. In fact, these people are an effective and well organized interest group, and they have seen to it, through various campaigns and petitions, that their message is heard clearly by their members, by journalists and by their elected representatives. In doing so, they gained a lot of support and visibility.

*Private Members' Business*

While historical census records are undoubtedly of great value, an important privacy principle comes into play: is it appropriate to retroactively change the conditions under which Canadians provided information during a census? Canadians were promised that their personal information would forever remain confidential.

Over the past 20 years, many legal opinions have been issued on the disclosure of post-1901 census records. This is a very complex issue, but so far no legal opinion has clearly established that the act authorizes Statistics Canada to disclose historical census records.

Under the regulations respecting the Privacy Act, individual census records cannot be made public 92 years after the collection of the data, since the disclosure provisions of the Privacy Act are governed by any other act. It so happens that the Statistics Act includes confidentiality provisions that prohibit disclosure. Therefore, the records of the 1906 and subsequent censuses cannot be legally transferred to the National Archives for public release.

The public can now have access to Canada's records for 1901 and previous censuses, through the National Archives. These records are now part of the public domain, since those censuses were conducted under various acts that did not include specific provisions on confidentiality.

Census takers received instructions that included guidelines relating to confidentiality, but these did not have any force of law. The 1891 census files were made public in 1983, and those for 1901 in 1993.

However, access to individual census files for 1906 and all subsequent censuses is explicitly forbidden by law. This of course is a cause of concern for a number of genealogists, historians and researchers who were expecting the 1911 data to become available in 2003.

The 1906, 1911 and 1916 censuses were carried out under the Census and Statistics Act. The instructions to the census takers of the day had force of law and included requirements for the confidentiality of the census data. The 1918 Statistics Act and subsequent legislation include provisions that are very solid and very clear about confidentiality. The 1921 census and all subsequent censuses until the present time have been carried out under this legislation.

A number of people have raised the issue of the existence of the "promise of perpetual confidentiality" or the "explicit guarantee of perpetual confidentiality" made to census respondents.

The answer to this question is found in the legislation and enabling regulations that were in effect at the time the census was carried out. In fact the instructions issued to census takers were as follows:

Any officer or other individual employed in any capacity whatsoever in the taking of the census shall keep secret the information collected by the census takers and entered in the tables or forms.

I believe that the members of this House will understand that, in order to resolve this question, consideration must be given to access to the census records as well as to the concerns of the Canadian public regarding the protection of privacy.

● (1910)

We must determine whether this bill represents an acceptable balance between the right to privacy and the interests of researchers and genealogists.

Bill C-312 proposes to retroactively change the confidentiality provisions of the Statistics Act. How would Canadians feel if the confidential information they gave to Statistics Canada was made public? Would that jeopardize the feeling that their privacy is being protected? What would happen to their trust in this government and Statistics Canada?

We have to find out what the public feels about a retroactive amendment to the act that would allow the disclosure of personal information. In Canada, there are currently 100,000 people who are still living and who were counted in the 1911 census.

We must obtain the answers to these important questions. This is why Statistics Canada has hired the Environics research group to conduct an opinion poll on the issue of access to historical census records. A series of townhall meetings and discussion panels were organized throughout the country to get the views of Canadians. These consultations were completed in January 2002 and a report was submitted to the minister.

The main reason for these consultations was to get the views of a wide range of people and groups and to give Canadians an opportunity to express their concerns about or their support for access to historical census records.

If access to historical census records is allowed, it should be done in a way that would meet the strong commitment of this government toward the protection of personal information. This is certainly something that we all wish for and insist on.

I would like to assure my colleagues that the minister responsible for Statistics Canada really wishes to find a balanced solution to this issue. This is why I believe we should wait for the minister to see the results of these consultations with the people of Canada.

● (1915)

[English]

**Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is a debate that we should not be having about a bill that we should not need. The Americans have been releasing census data over 72 years old for years. The British have a 100 year rule. I think very few of us in the House can understand why this country cannot have a 92 year rule.

*Private Members' Business*

The previous speakers have castigated Statistics Canada as being the problem in this particular situation. I would like to say that I do not believe it is Statistics Canada. I believe it is the Department of Justice, which is consistently making more and more interpretations favouring privacy, favouring the withholding of information rather than favouring the opening of information, the release of information.

There is a trend that is occurring in the realm of access to information law. Recently we saw in the case of ministerial expense accounts where a justice department ruling overturned the practice of 17 years whereby ministerial expense accounts were routinely available to the public, to the media. It was a justice department ruling. It reflected badly on the government and it reflected badly on all members of parliament on this side. That is because at every opportunity it would appear that the justice department is interpreting any ambiguity in the law, any nuance in the law, in favour of privacy.

In this particular case what we are dealing with is simply a resolution favouring confidentiality or declaring the need for confidentiality that was expressed in 1905 that did not have the force of law and then an amendment to the Statistics Canada Act in 1918 that did have the force of law which most of us would agree did not have the intent to withhold census information forever. It did not have that intent and other speakers have commented on this.

So why do we have the situation where an interpretation from the justice department overturns what is very evidently not the intention of the law at the time and not the will and the spirit of this parliament or the people in Canada at large? I would suggest that had Bill C-312 been made votable it would have passed the House by at least a two-thirds majority, if not three-quarters.

Let the record show and let all Canadians who are looking in on this debate realize that the backbench members of parliament, almost to a man or woman, support the principles in this legislation before the House.

I should say that Bill C-312 which I have examined very carefully is good legislation. It does what is necessary without opening the door to abuse of privacy. We are talking about census data that is 92 years old. This legislation even provides for the rare eventuality where someone might live more than 92 years. This legislation would allow for that person to object to the release of the census data or delay it until after that person had died.

What is inconsistent is the privacy legislation, or let me turn it around and say libel law. We have a situation in this country that when a person dies you cannot libel them, Mr. Speaker. You can say whatever you want about a person who has just died, no matter how dramatic or how false, and no one can prosecute you. Yet we cannot get the truth about a person because of this bizarre interpretation of the Statistics Act of 1918. You have the situation, Mr. Speaker, where you can say falsehoods about people but you cannot get the truth about people after they die.

There has been reference to the Privacy Act. It has been suggested that the Privacy Act says personal information should be protected for 20 years after the person dies. That may not be a good thing in

the Privacy Act, because again it does not reflect the reality that happens in case law with respect to libel.

Do people really require their personal information to be withheld after they die? We have never had that debate. Surely we do not have to protect this kind of information for 92 years or perhaps 30 or 40 years after they have died.

• (1920)

It makes no sense, but then it might make sense if we examine some of the testimony presented before the committee that was charged by the industry minister to examine the issue.

I have a quote here from the Privacy Commissioner who appeared before that committee. The Privacy Commissioner in his testimony admitted that the Privacy Act did not apply to the census records of 1906 and 1911 and that he was there in the general public interest to make sure the privacy of Canadians was protected. Here is what the Privacy Commissioner said:

There should be no limitations on privacy living or dead.

In other words, the Privacy Commissioner is proposing that there never be any revealing of the personal information of individuals that might be of interest to historians. I hate to tell you this, Mr. Speaker, because I know you know it, but Sir John A. Macdonald was an alcoholic. He liked the bottle. There are great stories about how in his office in the West Block there is a secret passage that still exists and that secret passage was built so that he could get his alcohol delivered secretly.

Other members are smiling at that, but the point is that it is very important for us to know the personalities and the personal things about the people who lead us. For the Privacy Commissioner to suggest that type of information should be kept secret forever does such a disservice to Canadians.

The same applies to the census records. The national archivist has called them a treasure. The Privacy Commissioner has proposed that they be destroyed. I cannot find the words to express my outrage at the very suggestion that this information that is so valuable to all Canadians should be destroyed at the whim of one person who is supposedly an officer of this House and yet takes it upon himself to instruct the bureaucrats who do actually follow the instructions of the Privacy Commissioner.

We now have a situation with this government, and I am not sure whether it is the political government or the bureaucratic government, where more and more the option is to close down, to shut out, to make private rather than open.

I think this is excellent legislation. I wish Canadians to know that at least the backbench and all sides of the House support the bill absolutely. It should have been votable.

**Mr. Murray Calder (Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry about what we have heard today in this debate. We are in the House of Commons. I am elected member of parliament. There are 301 of us that are supposed to be here to do the will of the people.

We had a motion passed in the House over two years ago that stated the release of the 1911 census should be done. Has it been done? No. Has the will of the people been done? No.

We have already established the fact tonight in this debate that the Department of Justice and Statistics Canada have tried repeatedly to find public opinion that the census should not be released. They have failed miserably. Everything they have done has shown that there are 7.5 million people in Canada involved in genealogy who would like to see this census released. That is the fact. The 92 year rule is still in effect. I believe it protects privacy. We have established that we are not breaking the law.

What does the public think? I will reinforce that. Industry Canada through StatsCanada, through Environics, went to members of the public to find out exactly what they were thinking on this issue, and they want the census released.

The House of Commons, 301 elected representatives of the people, passed a motion over two years ago passed to say that the

*Private Members' Business*

census should be released. Industry Canada has tried and failed miserably each time to find a poll to say that the people do not want it released. The people want it released. I will ask one more time if I have unanimous consent to deem Bill C-312 votable.

• (1925)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Is there unanimous consent to make this item a votable item?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired. As the motion has not been designated as votable item, the order is dropped from the order paper.

*[Editor's Note: For continuation of proceedings see Volume B]*

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CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, April 9, 2002  
(Part B)**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, April 9, 2002

[Editor's Note: Continuation of proceedings from Volume A]

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## EMERGENCY DEBATE

[Translation]

### THE MIDDLE EAST

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Pursuant to Standing Order 52, the House will now proceed to the consideration of a motion to adjourn the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely, the situation in the Middle East.

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ)** moved:

That this House do now adjourn.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I asked for, and obtained—I am proud to say—an emergency debate on the situation in the Middle East. I asked for this emergency debate because the situation is urgent.

With each passing day, the situation worsens. We must prevent irreparable wrongs. We must prevent the conflict from spreading throughout the region. We must prevent the destruction of everything that the Oslo process enabled to be built in Palestine. We must stop the killings and the spiral of violence and hate. We must rekindle hope.

Tonight's debate here in the House gives rise to strong emotions. I have received a number of e-mail messages from people who described themselves as Palestinian supporters, who expect something from this debate, some hope, some light at the end of the tunnel.

I have also received messages from people who support Israel and who fear that this debate is just about accusing Israel, not about listening to Israel.

The spirit that motivates me tonight is the same one that has motivated the Bloc Québécois since the beginning of our involvement on this issue. It is the spirit of a movement from Quebec, one that I hope will gain acceptance across the world. It is known as PAJU, which stands for Palestinians and Jews United. Palestinians and Jews united in recognition of the inalienable right of Palestinians to a territory, but also in recognition of Israel's right to secure borders.

In June 2001, the Bloc Québécois discussed in caucus—I hasten to add that this was not the first time this was discussed—a position that serves as our guiding principle. Our position reads as follows,

“Concerned about the situation in the Middle East that risks engulfing the entire region—” This was the case in June, 2001, and is even more so today. It also states, “That the Bloc Québécois continue to advocate its position that lasting peace can only be brought to the region... if : 1) there is an end to military occupation and Jewish settlement of the occupied territories”.

That was the first part of our position. Even today, it remains a key element of the solution to the conflict in the Middle East, but it is not the only one. There must be a satisfactory settlement to put an end to the annexation of East Jerusalem. We know that Jerusalem is an important city for Jews, Muslims and Catholics and an agreement is needed in that regard. There must also be a satisfactory settlement of the refugee issue.

● (1930)

According to the High Commission for Refugees, some 3.7 million Palestinians have found refuge **elsewhere in** the region following the occupation of the territories.

Another element is the creation of a viable Palestinian state. These people must be able to build a life for themselves.

And some will say “what about Israel”? There must be a comprehensive agreement based on the recognition of the right of Israel to exist within recognized borders.

This position enables us to understand the extent to which the conflict is rooted in history. And without some basic knowledge of history, we cannot understand—and I call it as I see it—the hate that can be seen on television, the spiral of death.

Let us take a brief look at history, not because it was my first profession, even though I am glad it was. To understand, we must go back to history. It is not that we want to solve a problem for the past; we want to solve it for the future, for young people, for development. But a persistent situation becomes part of history. In this case, history recognizes the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to a territory. That cannot be overlooked. We must be clear on that.

I say this now because I am sorry that in the positions that President Bush repeatedly took, he thought he could further the cause of peace simply by proposing a ceasefire. Let us not forget that for the Palestinians, the ceasefire meant ceasing to sacrifice their lives by blowing themselves up. The reasons behind this act of despair, which simultaneously kills other citizens, other people, are profound. They have to do with the belief in an inalienable right to a land. A ceasefire will not be achieved merely by talking about a cessation of hostilities without also talking about what is planned for the future.

*S. O. 52*

Even though he has not yet said so, I think that the Minister of Foreign Affairs will agree that we must step up our efforts to persuade our neighbours to the south to simultaneously seek a ceasefire and a political solution, and not just any political solution. **This** inalienable right has a basis in history.

Before speaking about the end of the settlements, I would like to mention, for the benefit of those watching on television and of members across the way, one point I neglected to mention.

● (1935)

At the end of World War I, the land of Palestine was promised by the United Nations that it would become a state. There are resolutions saying so. Back then, there were 600,000 or so Arabs and approximately 60,000 Jews. This land was promised that it would become a state for Palestinians.

We cannot go over the entire history, but Great Britain's declaration agreeing to make a homeland for the Jewish people in this region, to create an Israel, forced the League of Nations, and later on the United Nations, to meet an almost impossible objective. The sheer number of reports produced on this issue makes this clear. The League of Nations had an obligation—and it turned over the protectorate to Great Britain—to help the Palestinians achieve independence and, at the same time, to create a homeland for the Jews in the land of Israel.

That is why I say that Palestine's inalienable right is borne out by history, as is that of Israel, a right which was added on because Great Britain recognized this obligation to create the State of Israel.

Israel was created by a unilateral declaration of independence, on May 14, 1948. This was several months before the fall, when both the states of Palestine and Israel were to be created simultaneously. One state, Israel, was recognized, although it took some time. It was eventually recognized by the two major powers at that time, and then later, in 1949, by the UN. The other part of the territory has not obtained this status, nor has it taken it upon itself for all manner of reasons I shall not go into here.

So the saga we are now familiar with began. In 1967, Israel decided to expand its territory, doing so by occupying these former Palestinian areas. They did not become part of Israel but rather occupied territories. This they remained until, beginning in 1994, as the result of an agreement reached between Yitzhak Rabin and Arafat, they began to return to the Palestinians and the Palestinian authority control over part of the territories.

Now I come to the Oslo process, so called because it was the result of an initiative by a very small nation, I would emphasize this: the Norwegians. I must inform the Minister of Foreign Affairs that they are only 4 million strong. So a country does not have to be as big as the United States in order to take action. The Oslo process made a number of forward steps possible without addressing certain points, the refugee problem in particular as well as termination of the occupation and the colonies.

However, it may be said, as our friends do, that a settlement was very close to being reached. There was hope of a solution, on which there are several different interpretations. Some say Arafat is responsible, others that the proposal was not serious.

At this time, there is one thing certain: we are very far, more distant than ever before, from a settlement. The cycle of death and hate is speeding up.

● (1940)

Yet, recently, there had been a glimmer of hope that a solution might be at hand. We witnessed all of the Arab countries, under the leadership of Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, make a proposal that was an improved version of past attempts, but it did create hope. The United States was interested. I have to say that I was tremendously disappointed when the Netanya attack provided Prime Minister Sharon with the excuse to invade and reoccupy the territories. I criticized it, as I had criticized the attacks that killed and injured so many innocent victims.

What I am trying to explain is that the cycle of violence has a history, and that as long as we do not deal with historic rights that have been ignored, there will always be problems. The globalization that we are experiencing should allow us to act. That is why I believe that this issue is urgent.

It is critical that we do not allow the situation to deteriorate. We have all seen protestors take to the streets in every country throughout the region: in Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, Morocco. We have seen demonstrations by young people who cannot accept the humiliation the Palestinians have been subjected to. We have seen governments suppress them, but this is not entirely reassuring given these uprisings.

We also saw the situation in Israel, which is difficult from an economic point of view, but we also saw signs of hope. We saw Israeli reserve personnel refuse to serve in the occupied territories, because they felt such action was unworthy of Israel. We saw the Speaker of the assembly, Mr. Burg, tell his colleagues that "the occupation corrupts". And he said so forcefully.

The Bloc Quebecois has repeatedly proposed that we be ready and that, in Canada, the Minister of Foreign Affairs be the promoter of a quest for solutions. If necessary, there should be an implementation force. I believe that such a force is necessary, because what is going on right now must stop. There must also be an arms embargo. Why not immediately propose a peace conference? Why not do it now?

Globalization must also help change the balance of power. It is not true that we will let the United States settle this issue alone. Yes, they have influence, but the countries interested in a settlement, and there are many of them—none is too small to get involved in this settlement—must take part in it in their own way.

I have Jewish friends who are worried. I talk with them. I have Arab friends who are also worried. I say that all sides of the House must understand the roots of the problem and, as the Bloc Quebecois did with its resolution, target the causes and the roots, condemn terrorism and condemn violence against civilian populations. Again, we must demand an end to military occupation, an end to settlements in occupied territories, a satisfactory settlement of the East Jerusalem issue, the creation of a viable Palestinian state and a satisfactory settlement of the refugee issue. All this must be achieved so that Israel can finally live in peace.

• (1945)

It has to be pointed out that Israel is a small black dot in the region. Israel and the territories are the size of the Gaspé. They are no larger than the Gaspé Peninsula. We must use this debate to speak with one voice, because the international community is also responsible for what is going on there.

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the Secretary of State for Central and Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

I would like to begin by thanking the member for Mercier for putting this important issue on today's order paper.

[English]

As we stand here debating, the inescapable logic of the violence that is happening in that troubled region of the world is before us. The number of recent victims is some 1,500 dead on both sides. Many thousands have been injured. People's livelihoods have been destroyed and mutual trust shattered as habits of dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis, slowly built up over the last decade, have been abruptly abandoned.

[Translation]

The only way to end this conflict is to convince the Israelis and the Palestinians to cease their fighting and to resume negotiations and dialogue. Let us pray that our debate in the House tonight will help us to express to all the inhabitants of this troubled region how much we, as Canadian MPs, want to see an end to the violence and a return to the negotiations, which are the only road to peace.

[English]

Over the last few days we have witnessed a serious escalation in the fighting with an ever mounting toll of casualties and a major deterioration in the humanitarian situation. That is why we have called on both sides to implement security council resolutions 1402 and 1403 without further delay. This means a ceasefire. It means a cessation of all acts of violence including terror, provocation, incitement and destruction, and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian cities. Let us be absolutely clear. There is no military solution to the conflict.

• (1950)

[Translation]

I need hardly remind members that Canadian governments have been taking a close interest in the Middle East for 50 years now. Canadian peacekeepers have been in the region since 1954. Canadian contributions to UNRWA have helped to keep that organization alive since it first began helping the refugees. Canada has been one of the most active countries in the Middle East peace process, in particular through the task force on refugees, which it chairs. This work is the result of a commitment by and co-operation between governments in the region and governments of donor countries.

[English]

Canadians have long supported our government's efforts toward establishing peace, dialogue and development in the region. As they watch the ever worsening spiral of violence every night on their television sets many Canadians have urged the government to help

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the victims and take action to stop the conflict. Some would like us to assign blame. That gesture is most often empty of content and futile in effect. Rather, we ask of the parties that they respect certain fundamental principles.

We say to the Palestinians that every suicide bombing that targets the innocent is a criminal act, an affront to the teachings of religion, and a transgression of the rules of war and humanitarian law. We condemn those who encourage such acts either directly or by failing to speak out. The use, or indeed the abuse, of young people recruited for this purpose is particularly heinous. The offence of suicide bombings, against all religious and legal canons and our common humanity, undermines the legitimacy of the Palestinian quest for self determination. Once more, we demand that Chairman Arafat and all Palestinian leaders call for a halt to suicide bombing and repudiate its practitioners.

We say to the Israelis that armed incursion into Palestinian cities and towns and the destruction of offices, public utilities, homes and farms feeds the spiral of violence. The construction of settlements in the occupied territories sends the message that Israel's occupation is meant to last. These actions erode trust and undermine the legitimate hopes of Palestinians for a viable state of their own.

To both the Israelis and Palestinians we say that Canada insists on Israel's right to exist within secure and recognized boundaries and its right to defend itself against terrorism. We recognize the Palestinians' right to self determination and their right to a state within secure and recognized boundaries that is viable both politically and economically.

These rights are universally acknowledged and backed by the community of nations through UN resolutions and international law. Canada and the international community are ready to do everything necessary, including in appropriate circumstances providing Canadian monitors in the area, to help Israel and the Palestinians resume the quest for a political solution, a lasting and equitable settlement which takes into account the legitimate aspirations and needs of both parties.

[Translation]

The fundamental principles are understood by everyone. The path has been laid out: the May report by the Mitchell commission, which was accepted by Israel and by the Palestinian Authority, and the plan in principle for implementation of this report.

This plan and the security council resolutions call for a genuine ceasefire, for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities, and for an immediate end to all acts of violence, including terrorist attacks, acts of provocation, and destruction.

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[English]

The present situation demands that urgent concerns be addressed immediately. Israel must ensure that UN, ICRC and medical personnel are able to ensure the delivery of food and medication to all who need them. We have raised our concerns directly with the government of Israel and called on Israel to respect its obligations under international humanitarian law. We do not want the situation to be one more that feeds the resentment and hatred that has so often reduced the chances of peace in the region.

The Arab peace initiative of Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia which my hon. colleague from Mercier referred to was endorsed by the Arab League summit on March 28. We support the proposal because it responds to Israel's desire and need to be accepted as a full and recognized player in the wider region.

Over the last week I have consulted leaders from the region, the United States and the European Union. I have told the governments of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan that we warmly welcome the spirit and vision of the Arab peace initiative. We will continue to support all those who act moderately and constructively.

President Bush's statement of April 4 is vitally important. We welcome his decision to ask secretary of state Colin Powell to visit the region to renew dialogue and negotiation. I have written to Mr. Powell to convey Canada's full support for his efforts. I have been in close touch with foreign minister Peres of Israel, the EU high representative Mr. Solana, and my German and British counterparts. I have made clear to all Canada's readiness to support the renewed efforts with vigour, bearing in mind our chairmanship this year of the G-8.

•(1955)

[Translation]

Hon. members know that Canada has, for many years now, made a substantial contribution to the region, in the form of development aid and humanitarian assistance. In fact, since 1993 alone, Canada has contributed \$185 million to support development in the Palestinian territories and to meet the humanitarian needs of Palestinian refugees.

[English]

As gavel of the Refugee Working Group Canada will continue its work to help all the parties lay the groundwork in the context of international efforts to find peace for a solution to this paramount political and humanitarian question. It is time for the Israelis and Palestinians to resume their dialogue in co-operation with U.S. special envoy General Zinni to implement the Tenet plan and the Mitchell Commission report.

We must recognize and acknowledge the danger of an escalation of violence elsewhere in the region should the current violence continue unabated. Public opinion in the region is deeply disturbed by the continuing crisis. The area on the border between Israel and Lebanon is in ferment and we fear the risks of renewed conflict. Arsenals have been built up and there have been firings across the blue line. We have asked Lebanon and Syria to recognize the dangers of the situation and exercise maximum restraint.

The situation in the Middle East naturally raises intense emotions here at home. However none in the House can ignore the despicable actions of those who have seen fit to desecrate Jewish sites in our country recently. As we reflected the other day on Holocaust Memorial Day, any manifestation of this type of hatred is unacceptable to us in Canada. I know hon. members will join me in deploring and condemning unequivocally these callous and un-Canadian acts.

I have the privilege of being in touch with both the Jewish and Palestinian communities in Canada as well as many of our own NGOs to discuss the situation in the Middle East. It is my belief that their contacts and influence will enable us to respond to the crisis in keeping with Canadian values.

I would like to speak longer but our time is limited in the House and many of us wish to speak. I cannot help but end my short remarks with a prayer I heard today at the service for the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother. As it turns out, the prayer was read by an Imam from the city of Ottawa. The prayer went as follows, and I am sure members of the House will join with me in the spirit it represents:

Grant O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that, our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace.

[Translation]

**Ms. Francine Lalonde:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to seek the unanimous consent of the House to ask questions of the minister.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** Is there unanimous consent of the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

[English]

**Hon. Gar Knutson (Secretary of State (Central and Eastern Europe and Middle East), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, like the minister who spoke before me I too would like to commend the member for Mercier for initiating tonight's debate. I would also like to commend all members who have chosen to come here tonight to participate in the debate. At times like this, with this conflict so entrenched, so deep and having gone on for so long, it would be easy to presume that we cannot do anything. Each and every member who has come out tonight to speak should be commended in that sense. This is a critical issue. It is an issue that horrifies all Canadians and I think it is important that the House of Commons speaks out on the issue. In the little bit of time I have I would like to speak on the role of the United Nations.

From the earliest days of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the United Nations has been at the forefront of international efforts to bring peace and stability to the troubled region. Canada believes without equivocation that the United Nations continues to have that leadership role. The UN will, as always, have Canada's full support in working with the parties in ways that can be helpful in bringing peace to the region.

The UN security council remains the most appropriate and effective body to deal with the maintenance of international peace and security. The United Nations, for all its blemishes, for all its difficulties, for all its shortcomings, really is the place where this problem can be solved. The UN security council has taken its responsibilities very seriously in dealing with this conflict. Resolutions 1397, 1402 and 1403 have made an important contribution to the political landscape that shapes this conflict and signals in a most determined way the commitment of the international community to remain engaged in efforts to bring peace to the region.

Security council resolution 1397 of March 13 underscores the commitment of the international community to a vision of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders and living in peace, harmony and prosperity. It also demands the cessation of all acts of violence, reflecting the widely held view that there is no military solution to this conflict. The security council, in resolution 1402 of March 30 and resolution 1403 of April 4, charts the way ahead for both parties. These resolutions call for a meaningful ceasefire and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities. They call for immediate cessation of all acts of violence, including all acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction.

As our ambassador to the United Nations noted in his address to the UN security council on April 8:

That spiral of violence is threatening peace and stability well beyond the confines of the current fighting. And it is having disastrous consequences for people on both sides.

“Peace in the Middle East”, our ambassador told the council, “is everyone's business”.

These resolutions signal the international community's recognition of that undeniable reality.

I should like to address certain misunderstandings that appear to prevail with respect to some of the criticisms we hear about Canada's voting at the UN. Our voting is guided by the fundamental principles of Canada's Middle East policy. These principles have been endorsed by successive governments. Because they have been recognized for their fairness and their impartiality, they have given us credibility with the countries of the region and in the UN system. They have served Canada well.

To have our support, resolutions should reflect fundamental principles of human rights law. They must be consonant with the treaties, agreements and UN jurisprudence that Canada supports and that underlie the negotiations between the parties to the conflict. They should not undermine the peace process or single out Israel unfairly or indulge in inflammatory rhetoric. We take account of the voting intentions of like-minded member states, although our final determination is always our own.

Canada will always speak out against efforts to question the legitimacy of the state of Israel or to single it out for unjustified criticism. Israeli government representatives have expressed appreciation for our position and especially for our interventions, where we have sought to counter the isolation or de-legitimization of Israel, or where resolutions raise questions or promote action better dealt with in other forums.

*S. O. 52*

At the same time, Canada has criticized Israeli decisions and policies that undermine the peace process and infringe on the human rights of the Palestinians. We have not hesitated to raise these issues in meetings with the Israeli government and in our statements in UN bodies such as the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

● (2000)

Respect for human rights is another fundamental principle of our foreign policy. Israelis and Palestinians bear their full share of responsibility to respect and protect human rights. We hold them accountable for how they exercise their human rights responsibilities.

The upheaval and bitterness provoked by the ever more violent confrontation in the region have created a more than usual emotional climate in the commission's deliberations this year. We are examining all resolutions closely. The Canadian delegation to the commission is working with vigilance to modify or oppose unhelpful resolutions. Our aim in the commission is consistent with our foreign policy for the region: an end to violence and a return to dialogue and negotiation.

There is an important role for the international community in advancing the cause of peace and restoring some order to a situation that so clearly threatens the security of the region. There is no doubt that the international community is fully seized of the situation. Bilaterally, Canada and many other countries are using their best diplomatic efforts to press both sides to return to the negotiating table. We will continue to do so, particularly in support of the United States, whose influence is key to bringing the parties back from the abyss.

While responsibility for resolving the conflict ultimately rests with the parties themselves, as they are the ones who must make the hard decisions for peace, the United Nations too has a key role to play. Accordingly, we are heartened by the steps taken by the UN security council so far and are confident that the UN will have a key role to play in an effort to bring stability to that troubled region.

● (2005)

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time this evening with my colleague, the member for Edmonton—Strathcona.

[*Translation*]

A debate was requested tonight to consider the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to help the federal government with a response. It is a tragedy that we should need such a debate.

S. O. 52

[English]

For much of the 1990s, Israel and Palestine seemed to be moving gingerly along the path to peace and it seemed that this bitter, longstanding conflict might actually be coming to an end, but now the region stands once again on the brink of war. We have all seen the vivid images over the past few weeks: the house to house combat, the Palestinian authority headquarters under siege and lit only by candles, and tanks in front of the Church of the Nativity. While these images of the recent conflict are very powerful, we must also remember the most recent event that initiated them, the worst yet in a series of murderous suicide bombings, at a Passover event in Netanya, which killed 26 people, young and old alike, on one of the holiest days of the Jewish calendar.

From the comfort of North America we can criticize the Israeli response and wish that it had been more restrained or that Israel had waited longer for diplomatic and political solutions, but we must consider the incredible pressure that the nation of Israel is under from these brutal, suicidal terrorist attacks on innocent civilians.

It is interesting to note that at this very moment Canadian soldiers are in the field helping to root out the terrorist cells of al-Qaeda in the mountains of Afghanistan. We are present in that conflict thousands of miles from here in response to other terrorist suicide bombings, in response to the deliberate crashing of airplanes into the world trade towers and into the Pentagon, attacks in which thousands of civilians, including Canadians, were murdered.

Therefore some are asking a difficult question. They are asking the following. If the events of September 11 justify Canadian, American, British and other allied nations invading a country thousands of miles away to root out terrorists, how are the Israelis supposed to respond to these ongoing murderous terrorist threats right on their borders, a few scant miles from Tel Aviv and Jerusalem?

However, if an Israeli military response to terrorism is justified, it must be proportionate and limited. The announced Israeli withdrawal from Tulkarem and Qalqilya is a positive sign that Israel does recognize that its current anti-terrorism campaign cannot be an excuse for reoccupying lands that have already been ceded to Palestinian self-rule. We have been clear on this point. The military incursions into Palestinian controlled cities must come to an end as quickly as possible, especially in light of Secretary of State Powell's upcoming visit to the region.

Israel must understand that the military response cannot stand alone, that there must also be ongoing political engagement and that the movement toward Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza, initiated at Oslo, must continue, because ultimately Israel cannot exist as a nation permanently at war with its neighbours. Without peace, there can be no security.

However, Yasser Arafat must understand, the Palestinian authority must understand, the Arab states of the Middle East must understand, the international community must understand and the Government of Canada must understand that Israel cannot be expected to give up its right to a military response without clear evidence that terrorist actions will come to an end, because without security, there can be no peace.

It is not being one-sided to say that we have seen precious little evidence that Chairman Arafat understands this equation. He has repeatedly pledged to take action to stop terrorism but instead has appeared to turn a blind eye to it as a useful means of increasing political pressure. He has broken or undermined ceasefire after ceasefire, including an attempted ceasefire only a few weeks ago upon General Zinni's return to the region.

It is painfully clear that the suicide bomber is an innovation in the terrorist arsenal. People often talk of the despair and the poverty that drive young Palestinians to become suicide bombers. Indeed, there is terrible despair and there is terrible poverty in the refugee camps of the West Bank and Gaza, which is why this peace process is so important, but despair and poverty can never be used as excuses for terrorist suicide bombings, nor do these conditions alone create suicide bombers.

● (2010)

There is a whole infrastructure that turns an angry youth into a human bomb. There is a propaganda machine that is necessary to indoctrinate young people into the cult of martyrdom. There are bomb making factories that are necessary to make explosive belts. There are military planners who are needed to figure out how to cross checkpoints undetected and slip into hotels or buses. There are financiers necessary to provide financial incentives to those killed in suicide attacks.

It is this infrastructure that is cruelly exploiting the young Palestinians in the camps that has created the suicide bombers. In its military operations last week Israel produced evidence that the Palestinian authority itself has been financing the production of terrorist bombs for Al-Aqsa. Mr. Arafat's credibility as a possible partner for peace has been gravely undermined in recent months.

The trip this week of Secretary of State Powell may prove to be Yasser Arafat's last chance to show that he is sincere about breaking ties with terrorists. I hope, not for Mr. Arafat's sake but for the sake of long suffering Palestinian people, that Mr. Arafat does grasp what may be a last opportunity being offered to him because as President Bush said last week, what these bombers are blowing up is nothing less than the opportunity to achieve the very Palestinian homeland they seek.

The terrorist acts in Israel and Palestine are not solely the result of domestic pressures. We know that Iran is financing Hezbollah. I must add regretfully that the Canadian government has not yet seen fit to add Hezbollah to the list of banned terrorist organizations, only outlawing its military wing on the specious theory that its political and social agencies are not tied to its terrorist activities. Syria has helped to bankroll the operations of Hamas. Iraq and Iran have stepped forward with oil money to pay cash rewards to the families of dead suicide bombers.

The other countries of the region must recognize, even as Egypt and Jordan did to their credit some years ago and as Saudi Arabia seems to be doing with its recent peace proposals, they can no longer stoke the flames of Arab-Israeli conflicts for domestic political purposes or for any other reason.

*S. O. 52*

Recalcitrant nations which support terrorism must be brought into line or shunned by their Arab and Muslim neighbours, and by the community of nations as a whole.

The Canadian Alliance position on this matter has always been consistent and has always been clear. The Palestinian people have a right to their homeland in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and to the creation of a democratic Palestinian state. The only solution will be a two state solution which involves an exchange of land for peace.

In the short term our government should be advocating that Israel must withdraw as quickly as possible from area A to rekindle the peace process and then in the longer term Israel must withdraw from the vast majority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to secure internationally recognized lines.

Canada must insist that the Palestinian authority do more to dismantle these terrorist networks. We should clearly link our financial support for the Palestinian authority and its agencies to its progress in combating terrorism. It stands as a mark of shame that CIDA helped to finance the Palestinian coast guard, which recently was used to smuggle weapons from Iran.

Our support for the Palestinian authority and its agencies should be directly proportional to the progress it makes in dismantling terrorism and instituting democracy and the rule of law. This means that at the present time that our funding to the Palestinian authority should be conditional on signs of progress in this matter.

We should be clear with other Arab and Muslim states that supporting terrorism, even in the name of resistance to occupation, is unacceptable. Countries which support terrorism in this conflict should be diplomatically isolated by Canada until they too renounce support for terrorism.

Until that happens we should not be taking actions like joining the consensus to allow Syria to become a member of the United Nations Security Council or rewarding Iran with high level visits until we hear and see a clear and constant position against terrorism, which includes suicide bombing.

● (2015)

In all of our statements and votes in the United Nations and other international bodies we must act in a manner that does not aim to simply follow the pack, but to take the lead in promoting our values and to be balanced. Canada can and must play a constructive role in the Middle East.

The government must resist the easy path of vigorously criticizing Israel, while at times only nominally expressing concerns on the other side. We must put pressure on both sides, a pressure which will not refrain from telling what may be unpopular truths. We must apply this balance if we are going to see a long term peace.

We must develop a balanced, consistent and principled Middle East policy that supports both the goal of an independent Palestine and a safe and secure Israel at peace with its neighbours, and one which is absolutely clear on the moral unacceptability of any form of terrorism.

Let us hope that the debate this evening can mark the beginning of a re-examination of Canadian foreign policy toward the Middle East to achieve a truly balanced approach and peace.

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, this is my first opportunity to rise in the House as critic for central Europe and the Middle East. I am pleased to be sharing my time with the hon. member for Okanagan—Coquihalla, my senior critic, with whom I am pleased to work on this extremely important file.

We are gathered this evening to discuss the mounting tensions in the Middle East, to denounce the growing list of casualties and to put aside partisan differences in an attempt to define Canada's role in bringing Israel and Palestine back to the negotiating table. The Canadian Alliance believes that Israel and Palestine have the right to live as peaceful, sovereign nations within the borders prior to 1967.

As members of parliament we are pulled in many directions. Our opinions and actions are influenced by a number of factors. We may represent large ethnic communities in our ridings or be politically beholden in one way or another. However as we debate this issue tonight we must rise above personal or political bias in order to be objective advocates of peace. The interests of Canadians are not well served by taking sides in this conflict. As parliamentarians we must condemn violence and denounce terror.

As the only Muslim member of parliament there is a preconceived notion that I would be presenting a pro-Palestinian point of view. I am advocating peace and an end to violence. I have stated from my entrance into public life that I am first and foremost a Canadian and that I champion the virtues of peace, freedom and democracy.

In my short tenure in this portfolio I have begun to study the history of the region and the significant events that have led to the current crisis. The trust and expectations that grew out of numerous treaties and summits were dashed by inaction. With the decline of hope grows frustration, desperation and eventually bloodshed.

How do we get people who hate each other to sit down and negotiate? How do we get either side to let down their guard in order for the seeds of peace to germinate?

Canada is home to thousands of Jews and Arabs, just as it is home to Catholics and Protestants, Croats and Serbs and many other groups who have left their wartorn countries to live here alongside their traditional enemies in peace.

As a pluralistic and peace loving nation Canada is a model of tolerance. We should utilize our international reputation to help broker these parties together. Canada played a significant role in the partitioning of the region and it can play a significant role as an objective broker of peace.

*S. O. 52*

The Israel-PLO peace agreement signed on September 13, 1993 is the starting point. The agreement should become a comprehensive agreement based on UN security resolutions 242 and 338, including the right of all countries in the region to live within the secure and recognized boundaries and the requirement for Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights and return to the pre-1967 boundaries. This is an agreement that both sides agreed to and came ever so close to finalizing at the Camp David summit in 2000. It is a good place to reconvene negotiations.

What is required to get to the table is an admission by both parties that their actions have been complicit in the mounting death tolls. Clearly the Palestinian authority has not been doing enough to stop terrorist attacks and that is why the Israelis have acted. In all fairness Israeli forces have been disproportionate in their response to recent terrorist attacks.

The eyes of the world are on the Middle East. The international community, including the United Nations, the European Union, the United Kingdom and the United States, have called upon Israel to withdraw its troops and tanks from Palestinian territory. It is imperative for Israel to withdraw. This should not be seen as a retreat but rather a gesture of peace. This withdrawal must be accompanied by a gesture on the part of Chairman Arafat to denounce terrorists and use his influence over the Palestinian people to stop the suicide bombings.

The onus is placed on the heads of both leaders. We hear a lot of debate over the cycle of violence in the Middle East, that every violent act is responded to with equal or greater force. One of these two leaders must reverse the cycle and begin the cycle of peace.

● (2020)

What is required is the initial peaceful act to get the ball rolling. If need be, it can be the mutual agreement of Israel to withdraw and an end to the Palestinian suicide bombings.

As I mentioned earlier, Canada is a model nation of peace and tolerance. We are fortunate enough to have large Jewish and Palestinian communities here within Canada. I believe that we as Canada's elected leaders should engage these Canadians and work with them in conjunction with Israeli and Palestinian diplomats to seek resolutions to the conflict. Such an initiative here in Canada, removed from the immediacy of the Middle East, may result in a different perspective that could bear fruit.

I believe that it is better for Canada to export its tolerance and peaceful traditions rather than import the visceral hatred from warring regions that have resulted in the destruction of places of worship and attacks on Canadians of identifiable origins.

I would like to reiterate the Canadian Alliance position. The Liberal response to terrorist violence in the Middle East has been ambivalent at best. In particular, the Liberals have continued to permit fundraising by terrorist front organizations in Canada such as the civilian arm of Hezbollah. This is unconscionable.

While Canada must stand firm against terrorism, we should also continue to support any measures that de-escalate the violence in the region. Canada must urge the Palestinian Authority to take all measures necessary to stop terrorist violence. To date, the Palestinian

Authority has not done what is necessary to stop these terrorist attacks.

While recognizing Israel's inherent right to self-defence, Canada should urge the Israeli government to show restraint and look at long term solutions. The Government of Canada should stand ready to facilitate peace by whatever means are within its capabilities.

We all hope and pray that here in this place we can come together as parliamentarians. As I mentioned it is clear that this is an issue which goes beyond party lines. We would like to see peace in that region and I think all members in the House are genuine in wanting to achieve that. Hopefully we can speak with one voice in the coming days and weeks to try to bring peace to that region and help broker that peace.

● (2025)

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I rise this evening to speak on a matter that is truly of grave concern, a grave concern to Canadians and to citizens in every corner of the international community. I rise to speak out against the horror and the terrorism that has been and as we speak is being visited upon innocent children, women and men in the Middle East.

We are witnessing a terrifying escalating spiral of attack and retaliation, a vortex of violence that draws its destructive strength from events of today, of last week, of the last century, and indeed of previous millennia.

Who are the victims of this violence? Let me say clearly at the outset, there is no gain in judging history by the body count. Our sisters and brothers in the Middle East, be they Jewish, Muslim or Christian, whatever their ethnicity or nationality do not deserve to live their lives under threat or lose their lives to violence, whether that threat comes from Apache helicopters and military tanks, from fanatics with explosives strapped to their bodies or from talk of peace being achievable only by one side exterminating the other.

Peace requires courage. In recent memory we have seen that courage in the heavy price paid by those who have dared to take a stand for peace and dared to work for peace in the Middle East. In a land both blessed and tormented by its past, we have leaders who have reflected their time and leaders who have attempted to move beyond it.

Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin, Yitzhak Rabin and King Hussein, Shimon Peres and Yasser Arafat are leaders born into the same crucible of geography and history, leaders who have understood that their commonality was greater than their differences, leaders who have risked their lives for the cause of peace and the cause of justice. Leaders on both sides of this divide have paid for their courage. Anwar Sadat and Yitzhak Rabin have paid with their lives, not at the hands of the enemy, but at the bloodied hands of those within their own communities.

On three different occasions I have had the opportunity to meet Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres and Palestinian president Yasser Arafat. These are leaders who do not disguise the fact that deep animosities exist between them. However they understand that continuously fighting one's neighbour will result in destroying the moral fabric of one's own society.

These are leaders who see the children of their respective communities robbed of their futures when they are raised with guns in their hands and hatred in their hearts.

The viciousness, the humiliation, the terrifying threats in today's Middle East must be understood as a fight between members of the same family, the human family.

The violence Canadians have witnessed over the years through media reports of far away events recently took a toll much closer to home. Seven months ago a perversion of all that is civilized in our world occurred when terrorists struck in the United States. This has also played out in smaller ways in cities and towns across our country.

New Democrats have persistently called for recognition of despicable acts of hatred directed at visible minorities. We have called on the government to address the environment that is resulting in attacks against houses of worship for example. In the immediate aftermath of September 11, a mosque was firebombed in Montreal. This week we learned of arson at a synagogue in Saskatoon.

There is another family that must be heard in this crisis. That is the family of nations. In the international community today there is almost total consensus on urgent immediate steps that must be taken to move from death and destruction to dialogue and genuine human development.

In the words of Anna Lindh, Swedish foreign affairs minister:

To attempt to crush the Palestinian leadership is unacceptable to the international community and will only lead to even greater losses and insecurity for Israel. Israel's government must display maximum restraint and act in such a way that the Palestinians who wish to live in peace with Israel are not marginalized further.

• (2030)

Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres has repudiated the Israeli army's recent orations in the Jenin refugee camp as a massacre. The UN security council president has expressed the concerns of many of its members "at the further deterioration of the situation and violation of international humanitarian law in the Palestinian territories, including many victims among the civilian population and the threat of destruction of the Palestinian Authority".

Yesterday the president of the European Commission condemned the violence that has spiraled out of control. I quote:

Palestinian suicide bombings have killed or injured hundreds of innocent people in Israel. In the last 10 days 300 Palestinians have been killed, hundreds injured and 1,400 arrested as a result of house to house searches conducted by military forces.... The Israeli government must guarantee safe access for humanitarian workers to the Palestinian population. The Israeli government must immediately pull out its military forces from recently occupied territories.... To President Arafat and all Palestinians, I say abandon terrorism. The European Union remains convinced that President Arafat and the Palestinian Authority is the legitimate partner with whom peace talks must resume immediately.

Last week the International Committee of the Red Cross stated:

Terrorist acts, such as suicide bombings, are absolutely and unconditionally prohibited as are acts of reprisals, indiscriminate attacks and attacks directly against the civilian population.

Earlier this week Amnesty International stated:

The Israeli Defence Force and Israeli authorities should cease violations of human rights and humanitarian law, including unlawful killings and excessive use of lethal force; destruction of Palestinian homes and property; closures of towns and villages; arbitrary arrests; torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of

Palestinians; hindering access of medical professionals and medical care; hindering access of international humanitarian organizations, human rights organizations and journalists. Palestinian armed groups must cease targeting Israeli civilians and end unlawful killing of Palestinians.

Our own Warren Allmand, a former distinguished member of this House, now president of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, in a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs three days ago wrote the following:

I was shocked to hear that Canada, at the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva on April 5th, had spoken and voted against the proposal to allow the UN's Human Rights Commissioner, Ms. Mary Robinson, to travel to the Middle East.... A mission by Ms. Robinson could prove useful in reducing the tension and exposing the disproportionate use of force by the Israelis. While in the region, Ms. Robinson should also meet with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to urge him to not only condemn the attacks against innocent Israeli civilians, but also to apprehend those who are responsible for these acts and afford them a fair trial and punishment in compliance with international standards. However, should Mr. Arafat continue to be confined, it is difficult to comprehend how he can exercise his authority over any Palestinian.

Finally, in a press release earlier this week, Doctors Without Borders, the much respected international medical relief organization, stated:

The obstruction of medical aid for Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories has reached alarming new levels...effectively a removal of our right to access victims of the current conflict as well as a removal of civilians' right to access medical care.

• (2035)

I also want to refer to what Amnesty International had to say this past weekend on 1,000 Palestinian detainees being held by the Israeli government. It said:

In violation of international human rights treaties, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, to which Israel is a state party, detainees have been held in conditions which constitute cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

It has now been over a week since Warren Allmand of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development called once again for a United Nations international peace-keeping force to stand between Palestinians and Israelis to prevent further carnage.

To address what he describes as the overwhelming evidence that these incidents constitute a threat to peace under chapter VII of the United Nations charter, the UN has an obligation to take action. I understand that he wrote that Israel has previously objected to any UN peacekeeping force but its military initiatives have failed in preventing violence and the escalation of the conflict.

There are many other international bodies and international authorities that I could quote but suffice it to say that with such a clear international consensus on what urgent steps are needed, political parties here at home must clarify their positions on how to advance and how to achieve peace.

*S. O. 52*

We need to be free to express our views without fear of being branded as supporting one people over another, of supporting Palestinians over Israelis or Israelis over Palestinians. At the same time we must be prepared to take a stand. We were elected to represent the people of Canada in this parliament to take a stand in the face of such crises.

I want to once again make it clear that we in the New Democratic Party have taken a stand on the side of long term security within the rule of law for both Israeli and Palestinian citizens. Why? Because it is the only realistic path to peace.

Tragically, in Canada today we find ourselves in a desperately polarized environment which has, in part, been allowed to flourish because of a leadership vacuum left by our timid federal Liberal government.

The New Democratic Party has condemned terror wherever it has reared its ugly head and we will continue to do so. For us there is no justification that allows suicide bombers to target innocent civilians, nor is there any justification for an occupying army to deny medical treatment to its hostages.

In conclusion, I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that Canadians overwhelmingly are deeply disturbed at the abdication of leadership that we have seen from the government. On repeated occasions it has been very clear that the government has not adopted a position reflective of the values of Canadians because it has simply waited to see what the next directive, the next initiative would be from the United States.

I have said on many occasions in the House and I will say it again tonight, I recognize absolutely that the United States of America is our closest neighbour.

● (2040)

However, it is not an act of leadership and it is deeply disappointing when again and again answers to the questions in the House of where the government stands or what it will do have been to the effect that we are standing behind the American position. On far too many occasions the American position has been one of taking no initiative when people were desperately looking for leadership.

I conclude my comments tonight by imploring the government to recognize that Canadians expect more of their federal government. People around the world expect more of a government that has a reputation for principled, independent foreign policy positions.

It is not exactly an invitation to fly solo to ask the Canadian government to join with the international community in saying that we must be prepared as a third party to recognize that no peace will be possible in the Middle East without the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories, without forcing the parties to accept their responsibilities on behalf of their own citizens and on behalf of the citizens of the world to come together to negotiate the practical, concrete steps through a process that has to get underway and underway quickly to find a path to peace that will ensure that children in all parts of the Middle East do not continue to live under threat and are not robbed of the future they deserve.

**Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC/DR):** Madam Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure to speak tonight to this most urgent situation. Those of us who have had the very good fortune of visiting the Middle East always come away with a heartfelt feeling for the people there. My first visit left an impression with me that I will never forget. I treasured the experience to visit both sides in the conflict. The people are fascinating and just like Canadians. They want the right to live in peace, the right to bring up their children, the right to freedom and the right to enjoy life. They cannot do that now because of the situation over there.

I believe Canada can play a specific role in the Middle East and help to bring this conflict to an end. It may not be a role that is as prominent as the one held by the United States or the European Union but we do have a role, and it is not just criticizing, condemning or finding fault. I believe there are tangible things Canada can do and I hope we will do them.

Canada has limited options because the leaders on both sides of the conflict do not listen to anybody. They barely listen to the United States, a much more powerful country than ours and a country that has so much in the way of economic pressure, tools and levers it can apply. However the leaders of these two countries have not responded in the way the world expected and hoped they would respond.

Canada can support the efforts of the United Nations, the Saudi proposals, the Mitchell proposals and so on but there is still another role for Canada to play at perhaps a little lower level of negotiation and peacemaking than to actually deal with the leaders. I did not come up with this idea myself. This idea came from the Palestinians and Israelis with whom we met and had discussions.

One of the most fascinating experiences I have had as a member of parliament was when we invited the Israeli counsel from the embassy in Canada to our caucus one day to tell us Israel's side of the story. We also invited the Palestinian representative to Canada to come to our caucus. To our amazement, they did not hammer away at each other and were not critical of each other so much as their message was the same. Both of these people had the same message for our caucus: that there was a role for Canada. Perhaps it was not dealing with the leaders, but dealing with other levels in the health care or in the academic or parliamentary fields.

They suggested that this might be an appropriate role for Canada. Even if we cannot influence the leaders at this time, and it seems very difficult to do that, perhaps we can build communication bridges that are not there now. They urged us to do this. It is rather ironic that people on each side of the conflict were saying exactly the same thing to Canadians and urging us to act. They had some good ideas on how to do this. These are tangible things the Government of Canada and Canadians can do. I really believe that Canadians want us to help.

I was fascinated by the cross-country checkup held a couple of weeks ago on the Middle East crisis. I was amazed at the opinions and the thoughtful comments callers made on the Middle East. Obviously Canadians are interested and want us as parliamentarians and government to act.

*S. O. 52*

I agree with the minister that there is no military solution. It has to be a negotiated solution and negotiations need to continue and will go on for a long time. Many issues divide these two peoples and they will not be resolved overnight. First, there has to be a ceasefire and an end to the violence, and then very long, protracted negotiations will need to be entered into which could be another role for Canada.

● (2045)

We can play a second role in addition to the building of bridges and opening the lines of communication that are not there now. Five working groups have been established by the United Nations. They are representative of all countries in the United Nations. One of them is the United Nations working group on refugees.

Canada chairs that group and at the moment it is stalled, not because of Canada but because of the wishes of the parties involved in the Middle East. I would like to see Canada get that working group going again because the refugees and the quality of life they experience are very much part of the antagonism which has resulted in a lot of the violence.

Those of us who have visited refugee camps know what they are like, know what the working conditions are and know that there is absolutely no hope for the people who have been there for 50 years. That has created anger, hatred and desperation which lead people to do desperate things. Canada can play a role in that regard if we are able to restart the United Nations working group on refugees.

It will not be easy, but initial contacts with the Palestinians have indicated that they would be prepared to split the United Nations working group on refugees from the others and perhaps restart it to help improve the quality of life of and give hope to some of the refugees.

Let us imagine living inside the walls of a refugee camp for 50 years, raising children there and those children raising their children there with no hope, with no right to own property, with no right to work in some of the camps, particularly one I visited in Lebanon. We would be desperate too and would perhaps take desperate actions. Those are perhaps some of the reasons for some of the anger and hatred and the source of some of the terrorism. Canada can help in this area if we can get the United Nations working group on refugees restarted.

Not only can we have a role but we do have a role. As other speakers have mentioned earlier we have a responsibility to try to sort this issue out: where it started, who is to blame and all that type of thing.

Resolution No. 181 is headed "Palestine partition plan as approved by the United Nations November 29, 1947". This resolution took a British protectorate of land and divided it theoretically into one new Jewish state called Israel and one Arab state called Palestine.

If we look at the voting it tells a lot. The vote in favour of the partition plan included countries like Canada, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Haiti, Iceland, Paraguay, Peru, Poland and many others. If we look at those that were against the plan to create these new states, they included Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Turkey, all the countries surrounding this area.

Right from the very beginning they set up a situation which almost could not help but create conflict. Also on the negative side against the plan were Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Yemen, Cuba and Greece. It is ironic that neither the Palestinians nor the Israelis had a vote in the vote that created these two states, which has created the problem.

The United Nations failed when it arranged the resolution. It failed in doing the groundwork to get acceptance from the other countries in advance or finding some way to resolve the issues before it passed the resolution. If we look at the map, the countries that voted against the resolution completely surround the Palestinian area known now as Israel and the occupied territories.

All those countries in the United Nations that voted in favour of the partition have an obligation to help solve this problem, and Canada is very much one of those countries. In that way I believe we have an obligation. That is perhaps one of the reasons I developed this interest. I am not sure whether it is the people I have met in the area, the history, the beautiful country that is now being destroyed or our obligation, but for some reason I am motivated to be more interested in it.

● (2050)

When I read Resolution No. 181 I saw a lot of the reason why the problems have resulted. One of the tangible proposals I mentioned earlier that Canada could do was to try to build bridges among the health community, the academic community and the parliamentary community. This was not my idea. It was an idea generated by the Palestinians and the Israelis when they came to a meeting of our caucus entitled "What is the best role for Canada to play".

One of the things we could do was to create contacts with parliamentarians. We started the process as a result of an idea generated by the Palestinians and the Israelis. It started with a proposal from us to the Minister of Foreign Affairs to bring over parliamentarians from the Israeli Knesset and the Palestinian legislature.

We presented the proposal to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He looked at it and said that it was an interesting proposal which might be useful. Those were his exact words, but he also said that it was a good proposal and maybe they would look at it but he did not have the budget to do it. If it were useful I felt it was worth a little extra effort. I went back to my office and I wondered how we could do it.

First, obviously we had to get them here. I called Air Canada and was going to ask for discounted seats. I did not even get that chance. Air Canada said it was a great idea and donated some seats. It was a great encouragement for us to know right off the bat that a private sector company was prepared to participate in a parliamentary exercise.

*S. O. 52*

We called a few other organizations that participated. I wrote a letter to representatives of the Bank of Nova Scotia and called three days later to ask if they would participate in helping us fund it. They said yes, that they would give \$1,000. I thought that was wonderful and thanked them very much. Three days later they called back and said that they had thought about it and would up it to \$5,000 because it was a very useful and good thing to do. Other companies that were involved and participated were the Ford Motor Company, SNC-Lavalin and IMP. Saint Mary's University in Halifax was a tremendous supporter in a number of ways.

We originally planned to have the forum in Halifax with the parliamentarians from the Israeli Knesset, the Palestinian legislature and the Canadian parliament. Many individuals and companies in Halifax also contributed. Many individuals and groups raised money to donate to this process. I do not want to name them all, but I do want to name one. Joseph Faisal of Lerner & Associates of London, Ontario, raised money from his Muslim community as did some from Jewish communities in Halifax and other parts of the country. Everyone we asked for help gave it to us.

I learned the lesson that Canadians wanted parliamentarians in Canada to act. They wanted us to help. When Canadians give money we know they are serious. I was moved and proud of the reaction we received.

When we put together enough resources I went back to the Minister of Foreign Affairs who said "Okay, let's do it. It is a good idea. It will be a parliamentary initiative, not a government one". The fact of the matter is that the Minister of Foreign Affairs has helped this initiative in every possible way. Fortunately the co-chair of this forum was a man who is now the current Minister of Foreign Affairs. That worked out really well.

When we discussed the issue with the Speaker he extended invitations to the parliamentarians in the Knesset and in the Palestinian legislature. I had the good fortune to deliver the invitations on behalf of the Speaker. There was absolutely no hesitation. They agreed before we even left the room on both sides.

This is an indication of something tangible that we can do. As I said earlier, it was originally scheduled for Halifax. We needed facilities. I called the premier of Nova Scotia and with absolutely no hesitation he provided the facilities. I called the mayor of Halifax, Peter Kelly, because I needed something else. He said "Never mind the province. We will provide the facilities". They were fighting over providing the facilities for this wonderful forum.

Then a Jewish group asked us to hold a community meeting during the peace forum to show that Canadian Muslims and Canadian Jews got along well. The Jewish organization said that we needed someone who was independent to do it and asked us to invite the Catholic archbishop of Halifax to host it. I called him and he said he would do it in a minute. It was incredible that everyone involved agreed to participate.

● (2055)

It was all scheduled for the first week of October and then of course September 11 happened. It had to be cancelled for very real transportation problems and security issues. It is now rescheduled and we hope very much to have it before summer in Ottawa where

security is easier and much more flexible. Mr. Speaker has offered to help in a many ways, which is very important to us. As of this weekend we are still on schedule.

I tell that story because for me it is an absolutely fascinating story because the Israelis and the Palestinians told us how Canada could help and the specific, tangible role we could play. It is fascinating because Canadians want us to do it. They want us to participate and are prepared to help and even donate money. I believe that is the real test for Canadians.

I thank both ministers for their continuing support as we have gone through a frustrating time of scheduling and rescheduling. We needed a lot of help. The department has helped us a great deal. It has provided us with resources. Even though it is a parliamentary initiative run by an all party parliamentary steering committee, we have had nothing but co-operation from the department.

I want to summarize the two tangible things that Canada can do that are more than just condemning, criticizing and blaming. I encourage the government to initiate other confidence building measures in the health care community. There are health care workers who will do this. They are already doing it now. Dr. Arnold Noyek in Toronto has already started an organization that is extremely active in this field with health care workers in Jordan: Palestinians, Israelis and Canadians.

We can enhance that. We should encourage Dr. Noyek and his organization. There are academics in the three jurisdictions that are also working together. We should encourage that and for sure we should encourage parliamentary exchanges.

I talked with the speaker of the Palestinian legislature this weekend. He told me that one of the awful things that has happened in this conflict is that the Palestinian legislature, the equivalent of the House of Commons, has now been damaged. It is out of commission. I do not know how bad it is, but the Palestinian legislature has been damaged because of the conflict. Perhaps this parliament could take on helping to restore that parliament because it is their parliament. It is the equivalent of this building and this operation.

The second thing Canada can do that is tangible is to try to find a way to get the United Nations working group on refugees up and running again. It is not our fault that it is not running, but maybe there is some way we could apply pressure and convince all parties involved in holding it back that it should start again. If we can address some of the quality of life issues of the refugees in some of the camps around the Middle East, perhaps some of the anger and hate will be diffused and some of the actions against the Israelis may be curtailed.

It is not enough for us to condemn and criticize because while we are doing that people are still dying. I truly believe there are things we could do. Canada has a role. Perhaps it is more modest than those of the United States and the European Union, but we are in a special position. We are well respected by both sides like no other country. No other country can do the things Canada can do. We cannot do the things the United States can do, but we are so respected and held in such high regard that we can do a lot of things it cannot do.

I hope this parliament and this government will do everything they can to build bridges and to make connections to try to influence the leaders that maybe we cannot influence.

● (2100)

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Bloc Québécois for bringing this motion to the House. I was going to do the same thing, but unfortunately I was a few minutes late. I do appreciate the fact that we are having this debate tonight to discuss the situation in the Middle East.

As members may know, I and the member for Ottawa Centre have the distinct honour of being born in the Middle East. I was born in Syria and my colleague was born in Lebanon.

Since 1948, there have been five wars in the Middle East in the past: 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1982 and now in 2002. I was a Syrian soldier of some form in the 1967 war, so I know a bit of what happens in that part of the world. When I talk, I talk from my personal knowledge and experience as a citizen of Syria in the past.

As the House may recall, in 1982 the present prime minister of Israel, Sharon, invaded Lebanon. It is a coincidence that the same prime minister of Israel has invaded the West Bank. There is a policy of expansionism with this prime minister. What is happening today is exactly the same thing that happened in 1982.

In 1982 members of the Israeli justice system accused Sharon of crimes against humanity. Most recently he was charged again in a Belgian court with crimes against humanity. The witness was prepared to speak up and say that he was following orders but the car he was in blew up and the witness died. Therefore there was no case against Sharon as a war criminal for what happened in 1982.

What has happened lately does not surprise me. I do not think Sharon represents the Israeli or Jewish mentality. I have visited Israel twice in the last few years. I admire the Israeli population and their determination and drive to be successful. I had a chance to visit the tomb of fallen prime minister Rabin, whom I had the honour of nominating for the Nobel Peace Prize. With the killing of the former prime minister by the Israeli right wing, the peace process was also killed.

What has happened lately is a continuation of what has been happening for the last 50 years. There is no justification or no reason why these two countries cannot co-exist together, one Palestine, one Israel. The leaders of some Palestinian organizations and maybe Sharon himself are to blame, not the government. These men have a personal vendetta against each other with people on both sides paying; the Israeli side by suicide bombings and the Palestinian side by rockets, tanks and American supplied helicopters. Every weapon in its arsenal is being used against the Palestinian population.

*S. O. 52*

Every world organization condemns what is happening in the Middle East. Not a single government supports the Israeli aggression on Palestinian territory. As recently as two weeks ago, Turkish prime minister, Ecevit, accused Israel, its number one ally in the region, of genocide. This is like the pot calling the kettle black. If the Turkish prime minister calls what is happening in Israel genocide, we must wonder what the truth of the matter is in the region.

With regret, both Israel and Turkey deny genocide happened to Armenians. However the Turkish government is prepared to call what happened in Israel genocide without referring to what it did in 1915 as genocide against Armenians .

I would like to go further. In the 1990s the Oslo agreement took place between late prime minister Rabin and Arafat. There was a really good chance for peace to occur then in the Middle East. Both nations, Israel and Palestine, could have lived together in peace.

As I said earlier, I regret the death of the late prime minister of Israel.

● (2105)

Since then, 200,000 settlers moved into the West Bank. This is a total and absolute violation of the Oslo agreement. Why does everyone condemn what happened to the Palestinians but no one says that the 167 or the 200 settlements which exist there are illegal? They should not be there. I cannot comprehend or understand why we do not condemn them. Perhaps someone should ask us why we do not condemn them because the settlers are also a sore spot with the Palestinians. They look at them and say that it is another occupation, another expansion of Israeli borders from what they were to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

This recent violence began when Prime Minister Ariel Sharon visited a Muslim holy site knowing full well that his visit would incite problems with the Palestinian and Muslim populations. He threw the bait and the Arabs and Palestinians jumped on it. That is where the whole thing began. Of course the entire situation of September 11 made things worse, and we all know what happened.

Many people when they phone my office ask why we do not apply the same international rules that we apply in Europe to the Middle East, both on the Arab side and the Israeli side. They ask me why we have war crime procedures for Kosovo, Albania and Bosnia. The House passed a war crimes bill. Why can we not do the same for the Middle East, no matter who commits a war crime? It should not matter whether they are Palestinians or Arabs.

I was in Kuwait recently and made note of a couple of things which I want to share with everyone. In the declaration of human rights proclaimed by the UN general assembly on December 10, 1948, article 3 states "Every person has the right to life, liberty and security of person". Everyone knows that every hour of every day this article is violated. Why do we not pursue this?

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Article 9 states "No one shall be subject to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile". This has been going on for the last 20 years. I mentioned earlier that 1,500 people were arrested. Why has there been no jury, judge or someone to condemn this, someone to bring this issue to justice on the Palestinian side and the Israeli side?

Two weeks ago, around the end of March, the Arab league had a meeting in Lebanon and endorsed unanimously the position taken by the Saudi government, the crown prince, that they exchange land for peace, security and recognition of the state of Israel. That should be the foundation of a new process. Israel deserves the right to live in a secure border. At the same time Palestinians deserve as much right as any other nation in the world to have their own state, their own country and to run their own affairs. If anyone wants to hold Arafat responsible for anything, they should make him a true leader of a country, not of pieces here and there, and then say that he did not act responsibly.

The former leader of the official opposition mentioned that Arafat is the person responsible because he cannot control it. The proof is here. The hon. member could not control his own backbenchers and lost his own seat. He has already lost his own position. Because one is a leader does not mean the individual can control events, especially when the country is at war.

I will add one final point at the risk of repeating myself. It was said in the past that if we want to make peace, we talk to our enemies. If these two individuals do not speak, there will be no peace and things will escalate. It will be worse and we will all pay for it. I do not think it is in our national interest or any nation's interest to have a war in the Middle East because at the end of the day we will all pay for it. There is no need for it. I believe deeply that both people want to live in peace. They both deserve a homeland and dignity as human beings. Let us help them achieve that dignity and live in peace.

I am sharing my time, Madam Speaker, within my colleague from Gatineau.

● (2110)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mark Assad (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, first I want to thank the hon. member for Mercier for bringing this debate to the House. The ongoing crisis that is escalating from day to day made this debate necessary.

I also want to point out that our colleague from Burnaby—Douglas is here in the House. I am glad to see him safe and sound and I congratulate him on his great courage.

[*English*]

There were many comments made here this evening. I was listening to the leader of the New Democratic Party. I thought she had an excellent presentation which brought out the fact that many organizations in the world were speaking out with concern about the crisis and that Canada could play a role regardless of its size. Size is not what is important. It is the moral support that we can bring to the resolution of the problem.

One organization that has spoken out is the World Council of Churches. It said:

On March 9, the thirteen Patriarchs and Heads of Churches and Christian communities in Jerusalem issued a statement calling on the Israeli government to "stop all kinds of destruction and death caused by the heavy Israeli weaponry". It is their belief that "Israeli security is dependent on Palestinian freedom and justice...

That has been said by many of us here in the past. It went on to say:

—and they note that "the way the present Israeli Government is dealing with the situation makes neither for security nor for a just peace". The local church leaders also urge the Palestinian people to put "an end to every kind of violent response...

I think that anybody who is fair-minded and has any sense of humanity understands that suicide bombings and the killing of innocent people is inconceivable and should be denounced. However the occupation and total submission of a people is unacceptable.

One member mentioned that for over 50 years people have lived in refugee camps under the most dire conditions. Can we expect these people not to take desperate measures? We have seen that in the past. Therefore, we have to resolve the occupation problem. Once that is resolved, we are on the road to peace.

I would like to read another quote from the World Council of Churches. It said:

Even more distressing is the emergence of new patterns of abuses such as the Israeli military re-occupation of Palestinian cities, incursions into refugee camps...

They are destitute enough without that. It went on to say:

—mass arbitrary detentions of civilians under degrading circumstances and the deadly attacks on medical and rescue staff, as attested by Israeli, Palestinian and international human rights organizations.

It goes without saying that these conditions cannot continue. Like one of my colleagues said, "If you want to make peace, talk to your enemy". However we have seen very few attempts to sit down and resolve the problems. The major problem is the fact that the occupation is still happening. If we cannot resolve that how can we expect any peace? That is the first message we have to give to that part of the region.

When it comes to a resolution of the problem, there is hope. Tonight I heard our Minister of Foreign Affairs mention that Canada could be called upon to monitor. I take from the word monitor that maybe the Canadian government would send a force over there to keep the peace between the belligerents that seem to be out of control.

One proposal was brought forward last year when the President of the United States sent over Senator Mitchell. He came back and wrote a very substantial report with recommendations. The first recommendation was an unconditional cessation of violence. Second was a restoration of confidence through dialogue and discussion. Third was the resumption of negotiations for a sustainable and just peace.

● (2115)

That is needed to break the cycle of violence. It is necessary but it cannot be done without third party assistance. That is where Canada could be instrumental. We should speak out because all other countries in the world look up to us. They have faith in our judgment. We could take this step.

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A former member of the House who is now in the Senate, Senator Pierre De Bané, proposed what he thought would be a solution: a multinational security force. This was discussed among a lot of our colleagues. The force would have a few purposes. First, it would try to overcome mistrust, divide the hostile parties and bring about peace in the region. Second, it could call on countries that are friends of Israel like Canada, the United States, France, Great Britain and even Egypt, the first Arab state to make peace with Israel.

The multinational security force is something we could easily put into effect because we have peacekeeping experience in different parts of the world. We have played the role of peacemaker. We are not powder monkeys. We are peacemakers. Let us keep that in mind.

Many speakers tonight have brought forward views about how the conflict could be resolved. To begin with we must have the means to stop the hostilities. This can only be done if the United Nations comes up again with the idea and insists that a multinational force like the one Canada has proposed go into the area to keep the calm and get a dialogue going for peace.

For more than 50 years people have been living in refugee camps humiliated and destitute. They take the most desperate measures to try to resolve their problems. It creates a cycle of violence. Breaking the cycle will require a third party force. We can be that force in the world. It is important that the Canadian government at the suggestion of the minister go there to monitor the situation. That is one of the steps.

Another thing that was brought out was the peace proposal by Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. There is nothing new to it but I am convinced if the peace process brought forward by Prince Abdullah were adhered to the Palestinians would be happy with the situation. If that is something the United States and the European community are contemplating it could be the basis of a new peace initiative or understanding.

• (2120)

[Translation]

There is a lot more to say but, unfortunately, I am running out of time. I will close by saying that I was very pleased to hear the Minister of Foreign Affairs mention the possibility that Canada could play a monitoring role in the Middle East to ensure that there is peace in the region during the discussions.

[English]

There is a lot of emotion in this issue. I listened to the first speaker of the Alliance, the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester. He made a statement I thought was unbelievable and I have to mention it. He said resistance to occupation was unacceptable. Does that make any sense? What about the French resistance and all the resistance during the second world war? Let us take the example of Nelson Mandela whom we honoured as an honorary citizen.

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I ask the House for unanimous consent to allow me one minute to present a motion supporting our government's position at the UN calling on Israel to withdraw, resolution 1402.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** We will take one step at a time. First, the hon. member is asking to take the floor again.

According to the rules he must have unanimous consent to take the floor again. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, in Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness* the main protagonist Kurtz was dying as he went down the Congo River. His last words were "the horror, the horror". Members can imagine the numbers of people in the Middle East, Palestinian and Israeli, who are saying "the horror, the horror".

All of us have been held rapt by the television, dismayed, disgusted and deeply saddened by the carnage taking place in Israel and the occupied territories. We feel for the people of Israel. We feel for the Muslims and the Jews. However it appears there is no end in sight to this intractable war.

In a war that has few certainties there may be a few. First, smashing through Palestinian homes, killing innocent civilians, destroying infrastructure that is there for the people, giving people no hope whatsoever, and destroying their economy and their future will only serve to ensure the conflict continues forever.

Second, suicide bombers will never be able to drive Israel out. Israel is here to stay. Murdering innocent Israelis will only harden Israel's position. Israel will not be defeated.

The continued illegal occupation of Palestinian territories and the expansion of illegal settlements in the territories will only ensure the Palestinians continue to act out in any way, shape or form left to them. It will ensure there continues to be conflict and death in the area.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad are the enemies of peace, as are the Israeli and Jewish extremists responsible for killing their former prime minister.

What can be done in this situation? How do we untie the Gordian knot? First, there must be recognition of a Palestinian state. Its borders must be defined as those that existed before 1967. A demilitarized zone must be placed around the borders and they must be policed by a multilateral peacekeeping force.

Second, Islamic Jihad and Hamas must be rooted out and destroyed forever. If the Palestinian Authority and Mr. Arafat are willing to turn a blind eye and unwilling to take responsibility for rooting out terrorist organizations, perhaps a third force is a better way. An international peacemaking force could go in, root out these individuals and decommission their weapons. It would not be easy, but better they do it than the Israelis.

Third, the illegal settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip must be removed. Members of the House would find it appalling to know that the settlements were built in the last couple of decades for members of the Jewish expatriate community from Russia, eastern Europe and the United States. These people have no place in the area. They were not born there. They have no family connections to the area. They have no connection other than their religion. They must find other places to live. It is not right that they displace Palestinians from their homes.

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Fourth, the security of both Israel and Palestine must be ensured by both parties in word as well as deed. It is not acceptable that Mr. Arafat and the Palestinian Authority tell the Israeli people they want peace while turning a blind eye to Hamas and Islamic Jihad in their own territories who are taking up arms and blowing up innocent Israeli civilians. Nor is it acceptable for the Israeli government to stand and say it wants peace while allowing not only the presence but the expansion of settlements in Palestinian territory, something that is in violation of United Nations resolutions and basic norms of decency.

● (2125)

We tend to forget that while Jerusalem is important to Muslims and Jews it is also important to Christians. As Jerusalem was deemed an international city in 1948, so too must Jerusalem be named an international city in the future. The issue will not be resolved any other way. Neither side will accept any proposal that allows the other to retain control of its holy sites. The city belongs to the world.

The Jewish people have been subjected to anti-Semitism in many parts of the world and experienced the horrors of the Holocaust. They have endured so much pain, suffering, racism and discrimination it is difficult to imagine they would take it on themselves to inflict pain and suffering on another people. It is difficult to imagine why they would destroy the hope, future and economy of another people. I find that thinking impossible to fathom.

It is also impossible to fathom Muslims who have a beautiful religion turning a blind eye to the murder of innocent Jewish civilians in a most egregious fashion. It violates their beautiful religion. It violates Islam. I do not understand why it is allowed to continue.

I will issue two challenges. I challenge the Muslim community to stand and speak out against anti-Semitism. I ask Muslims to stand up for peace. I ask them to stand against terrorists who are willing to blow up innocent Israeli people.

I challenge Jews to speak out against racism against Muslims. I ask them to speak out when Kurds are thrust into crisis. I ask them to speak out when Muslims are subjected to racism and discrimination. I challenge both groups to do that.

Getting out of this mess will require an international effort. It will require a coalition of the United States, the Arab community, the European Union and the United Nations speaking with one voice. Such a coalition must be committed to dealing with the thorny issues that affect that part of the world and putting forth common solutions for the betterment of civilians on both sides. If this does not happen the intractable conflict that is resulting in the deaths of hundreds of innocent civilians will only get worse. Furthermore, the problems will not be confined to the Middle East but will expand.

We have already seen situations in Europe where Muslims and Jews are fighting. I fear the conflagration will expand and that, sadly, Jewish and Muslim conflicts will take place in many other parts of the world as the hatred spills over and is cemented.

I will never forget a Muslim obstetrician who every day would go across to a hospital in Israel where he delivered the babies of Israeli women. When asked why he did it he said "It is difficult to hate a person who is there to deliver your baby." It was a remarkable effort

on the part of that individual to put his hand out in peace, go the extra step and not be bound by history.

I ask that Jews, Muslims, Israelis and Palestinians work together toward that common goal. If they do not they will both sink into a bloody inferno the future of which I do not like to think about.

In closing I draw to the attention of hon. members a saying that is common in the Middle East: Peace is when a son buries his father; War is when a father buries his son. No one wants any more wars. No one wants fathers burying their sons and daughters. Let us have peace.

● (2130)

No one wants anymore wars. No one wants any fathers burying their sons and daughters. Let us have peace.

**Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance):**

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of the constituents of Surrey—Central to participate in the debate on the grave situation in the Middle East.

The hon. members for Coquihalla—Okanagan, Edmonton—Strathcona and Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca have all spoken on this issue with grave concerns. I will not repeat what they have said but I strongly support what they have already said.

Before I venture into details and the more serious content of my speech let me use the toughest words in the toughest context to condemn violence by suicide bombers and other sympathizers of Palestine. I strongly condemn any form of terrorism as does every Canadian. Let me also condemn in equally tough words the violence by the armed forces of the State of Israel.

Violence has no place in civilized society. Violence cannot be ended by another form of violence. Injuring, maiming or killing innocent civilians, children and women should not be tolerated by the humane society of the so called global village. Human rights of innocent people must be respected at any cost.

I am one of the few members in the House who had the opportunity to visit the current conflict area. I visited Israel, Jerusalem, East Jerusalem and Bethlehem. In Palestine I visited Ramallah, West Bank, Erez, Ramaha and Gaza. I have also driven to Jordan.

I visited refugee camps in Palestine and Jordan and have spoken to a number of officials, volunteers, residents and refugees. I have spoken to refugees who have been temporarily living in refugee homes for about half a century under deplorable conditions. Their children are not able to go to schools, the sick are not able to get health care and the hungry could not even get food, clothing and shelter.

I have seen with disappointment the shouting fence at the border of Gaza and Egypt where about 900 family members remained separated for about half a century. The international community has neglected to rejoin those separated families. The father and son are on one side and the mother and daughter are on the other side of the fence. They call it the shouting fence because two fences are separated by a road about 60 or 70 feet wide and they yell to communicate with each other since there are no other means of communicating. The international community has been watching 900 hundred families that have been separated for half a century.

The unemployment rate in the Palestine controlled territory has been about 85%. Roads or other infrastructure is either non-existent or in very poor condition. After my visit I predicted dire consequences from the neglect, absence of preventive diplomacy and the will to actively prevent or resolve the conflict and the double standards applied by the international community in that region.

Though it is late the conflict can and must be ended. It can be resolved rather than left to a point where the region is more polarized. Religion becomes a serious and major element of conflict. It is already there and terrorism becomes sporadic and systemic in this civilized society and a threat never seen before.

In the recent conflict suicide bombings have been devastating, killing and affecting innocent people. They have caused suffering to innocent families in buses, coffee shops, restaurants, shopping malls and any other gathering place.

• (2135)

The attacks and incursions by Israelis, killing and affecting innocent people, attacking hospitals, denying suffering innocents the medical essentials, damaging ambulances, and destroying homes and properties, are not fair and just.

Canadians are a peace loving people and have been peacemakers and peacekeepers of the world but that influence is fading. Let us see what Canada has done or what Canada's interests are. Through CIDA Canada provides \$10 million foreign aid to the Palestinian authority per year, mostly through UN relief agencies, the World Bank and humanitarian aid. This aid could be used as a lever for pressuring an end to violence.

However let us look at the unofficial figures that are not given by the ministry of foreign affairs. In 1994-95 Canada committed \$55 million in foreign aid to Palestinians in that region. By 1998 Canada had already spent \$136 million, basically misdirected foreign aid. That is more than triple the amount that Canada committed. I have seen the details of the \$136 million. I was surprised to see that most of the money has been spent on cultural functions, organizing seminars, and those kinds of things, \$25,000 for one seminar and \$20,000 for another seminar.

Trade is not an important element even though Canada has a free trade agreement with Israel that was signed in 1996 and a similar pact with the Palestinian authority signed in 1999. Trade with Israel is about \$1 billion and about \$1.5 million with the Palestinian authority.

Canada has about 228 soldiers stationed in the region, some 190 with the UN force in the Golan Heights, 30 with a multinational force in Sinai, and eight personnel serve with the UN truce

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supervision mission in Jerusalem. Their fate and safety are not assured. Canadian forces are overstretched and not able to play a major role in the Middle East peacekeeping mission. Canada cannot exercise meaningful political leadership. This is not a realistic option in that region.

The United Nations is also weak in this crisis. It is not well placed to deal with the kind of terrorist violence that has undermined the peace negotiations. The United Nations can only pass resolutions such as 1402. Only the United States of America has political clout and weight. The United States of America gives about \$3 billion to Israel per year. The U.S. can force both parties to come to the negotiating table.

Canada firmly supports the Israel-PLO peace agreement signed on September 13, 1993. This agreement should become a comprehensive agreement based on UN security council resolutions 242 and 338. It seems, perhaps due to double standards, that these resolutions have never been applied.

Not only has the requirement for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967 not occurred, but Israel has also annexed the eastern part of Jerusalem which was taken from Jordan in 1967 and the Golan Heights seized from Syria in 1967. These annexations and the movement of Israeli civilians into these territories are not and should not be recognized by the international community. The international community has to be fair and just.

Canada does not recognize permanent Israeli control over the territories occupied in 1967 and opposes all unilateral actions intended to predetermine the outcome of negotiations. Canada considers such actions to be contrary to international law and unproductive to the peace process. Canada recognizes that the legitimate rights of Palestinians must be realized, including the right to self-determination to be exercised through peace negotiations.

So what can Canada do? Unfortunately Canada does not have much influence except to support the U.S. led peace mission. We can end fundraising by groups like Hezbollah.

What can the international community do? I give the analogy of a domestic pressure cooker. When heat is burning under the pressure cooker steam is produced. If people do not want steam it can be contained by the weight of the pressure cooker. There is always an escape valve. If we do not want steam to be produced, what must be done? The international community must remove the heat that is burning under the pressure cooker so no pressure is required and no steam is produced. That is what the international community must do to recognize and identify the causes of terrorism and violence in that area. That is what we must do.

• (2140)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will share my time with the hon. member for Brossard—La Prairie.

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[English]

Let me be clear about the difficult situation in the Middle East. The war which is going on today between Israel and the Palestinians is not about the occupation of the territories, problematic as that reality may be. It is about the legitimacy of Israel's existence.

In 1948 Israel was attacked by five Arab armies in an unprovoked attack in contravention of the two-thirds majority vote of the United Nations creating the state of Israel. It was in that defensive war that Israel came into possession of the land demarcated by the so-called green line. Despite this resolution well over 50 years ago Israel remains unrecognized today by any Arab states with the exception of Jordan and Egypt.

The PLO was founded in 1964. That is three years before the 1967 war during which in a defensive action Israel came into possession what today we call the territories. Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah have made it graphically clear that their unrelenting hostility to Israel is not linked to any peace agreements, but rather to the very fact of Israel's existence. Moreover, they have been equally clear in indicating that they consider terrorism, specifically and explicitly targeted at civilians, as their weapon of choice.

Donald Rumsfeld, the American secretary of defense, has stated:

Murderers are not martyrs. Targeting civilians is immoral, whatever the excuse. Terrorists have declared war on civilization, and states like Iran, Iraq and Syria are inspiring and financing a culture of political murder and suicide bombing.

At the height of the Oslo peace talks, with security co-operation apparently solidly in place and with one of the accord's key architects, Shimon Peres running for prime minister, terrorist attacks intensified.

Israel has amply demonstrated its commitment to the principle of land for peace and its willingness to relinquish occupied territory. It did so with Egypt with regard to land taken in another defensive war, the Sinai, and later with Jordan. It demonstrated an unprecedented and historic willingness to relinquish territory at the Camp David 2 negotiations. This offer was met, not with a counter offer, but rather with intifada and increased terrorism.

It is clear that this conflict pre-dates the occupation that followed the 1967 war and that the core of this issue is not the occupation of the territories but rather the fact of the existence of the state of Israel in the first place.

While the list of facts and arguments supporting this view are long and compelling, it is important to note the context. George P. Fletcher wrote in the *New York Times* and other legal experts have long affirmed that:

...it is not illegal for victorious powers to occupy hostile territory seized in the course of war until they are able to negotiate a successful peace treaty with their former enemies.

This is what Israel has done. Israel has consistently shown a willingness to engage in precisely such negotiations, but whatever the course of these negotiations, successful or otherwise, the terror has continued.

I bring to the attention of the House a recent interview conducted by the BBC's *HARDtalk* on April 1 with the person identified as the

Hamas representative in Lebanon, Osama Hamdan. Tim Sebastian is the person who conducted the interview.

Tim Sebastian: So you don't say whether you will listen to them (leaders of Arab states) if they said "stop the intifada", and you (Hamas) certainly don't listen to Yasser Arafat when he says "stop the suicide bombing".

Osama Hamdan: Yasser Arafat didn't say that.

Tim Sebastian: He didn't say "stop the bombing?"

Osama Hamdan: No, he didn't say it.

Tim Sebastian: That's what he says he said.

Osama Hamdan: He said it the day after the operation.

Tim Sebastian: So he is saying one thing to the outside world, and a different thing to you.

Osama Hamdan: Yes. Maybe.

Tim Sebastian: That's quite an admission...That's quite an admission.

•(2145)

Let me repeat that Osama Hamdan is the Hamas representative in Lebanon.

This is not news. This is a reiteration of an old story. The point is that the current Palestinian leadership has made it clear that the terrorism will continue no matter what stance Israel stakes out, no matter what the status of the conflict is, no matter what concessions Israel may make in the context of peace negotiations. No civilized country mired in the context I have just laid out can be expected to passively submit to such a clear, premeditated, strategic assault on its survival as a state.

There is a second level to this conflict that strikes still closer to home. Israel, no more or less so than any other democracy, has no pretensions to perfection. Moreover, it is legitimate to engage in constructive debate with regard to her policies or that of any other country.

What is not acceptable is to allow such debate to deteriorate into raw anti-Semitism. I am referring here to the poisonous Zionism is racism resolution of the United Nations and the more local incidents of anti-Semitism, as manifested in France, dating back to the infamous cemetery desecration at Carpentras, or as occurred last week in Canada with the firebombing of a synagogue in Saskatoon.

In France in the past few months, the growing anti-Semitic trend includes attacks on and desecration of synagogues, documented reports of chants of "vive bin Laden" and "death to the Jews" in street demonstrations and the shockingly disparaging slurs expressed privately against the state of Israel by the French ambassador Daniel Bernard. The echoes of the experience of French Jews during the infamous Vichy regime are stark.

The organized Jewish community of Canada has a proven track record of coming to the defence of any group subjected to such attacks. I would like to quote a few examples if I may.

On September 17, 2001, Mr. Keith Landy, national president of the Canadian Jewish Congress, wrote to Mr. Singh, president of the National Association of Indo-Canadians, and stated:

...I write to condemn unequivocally the heinous attack that gutted the Hindu Temple in Hamilton...We share your pain and anguish now at the loss of your spiritual home and communal gathering place and your sense of outrage that there would be those who could have their hearts filled with such venom and anger as to lash out in this contemptible way.

Further, Mr. Moshe Ronen, national president of the Canadian Jewish Congress, stated on October 10, 2000:

We strongly condemn the defacement of a Palestinian centre in Toronto and Jewish synagogues and other institutions in Toronto and Ottawa, carried out by perpetrators unknown. Such acts of vandalism have no place anywhere in Canada.

Further, the chair of the Canadian Jewish Congress, Pacific Region, wrote to Mr. Sikandar Khan, president of the B.C. Muslim Association, on November 27, 2000, and stated:

Please accept the support of Canadian Jewish Congress, Pacific Region, for the Muslim community of B.C., over the fire that desecrated the Masjid Mosque in Surrey on Friday...we unequivocally condemn such a grotesque act as an assault on all Canadians.

Last is a letter from February 27, 2002. Mr. Ed Morgan, chair of the Canadian Jewish Congress, Ontario Region, wrote to Pandit Ganesh Persaud and stated:

We were deeply shocked to learn of the attack on your temple that took place on February 8. The desecration of a holy temple is a despicable act of hatred and cowardice.

In sum, our Canadian democracy is our sacred trust. It is rooted in a set of values that is predicated on resolving conflict in non-violent ways. It is for this reason that we defend each other against violence irrespective of our different political, religious or cultural perspectives.

Can there be any conceivable basis for disagreement on this issue in the wake of the events of last September? It is why rabbis, Jewish community leaders and Jewish community groups spoke out on behalf of the Muslims, the Hindus and the Palestinians, as I have just quoted, after the tragedy of September 11 when they suffered vandalism to their institutions. Recent attacks on Canadian synagogues are profoundly disturbing and simply cannot be tolerated. They must be condemned by all parties irrespective of individual views held on conflicts in the Middle East or elsewhere.

● (2150)

I urge all members of Canada's parliament to have the courage to understand and identify the actual roots of the history of the conflict in the Middle East. Let us not allow the hatred that distorts that history to take root in our own country.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jacques Saada (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the complexity of the Middle East's history, emotions and dynamics require a great deal of humility from all those who venture in this political minefield. This humility is all the more necessary since, in these times of extreme violence, moderation no longer seems to be a virtue.

Of Jewish origin I was born in an Arab country, namely Tunisia. I spent a short part of my life in Israel. I grew up in the context of Zionism. As a child, I remember my parents being glued to the radio, listening to the news on the 1956 Suez conflict. As a teenager or young adult and a member of a Zionist organization, the *hachomer hatzair*, the young guard, I was a volunteer during the 1967 six day war, and I lived in a kibbutz close to Haifa.

I learned at a very early age that in the concentration camps, in the middle of the pogroms and before the inquisition stakes, or in the comfort of a western house during the Pesah, Passover, Jews would repeat this incantation, this symbol of our Judaism *Bechanah habah*

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*birouchalaim*, next year in Jerusalem; the hope of finding again the land of our ancestors, the hope, but also the determination.

So, Israel has always been part of my culture, my deep convictions, my ideals and who I am. But at the same time that I was learning to fight anti-Semitism, I learned to fight all forms of racism, I learned to fight injustices.

Is it not tragically remarkable that the Palestinian and Jewish peoples both have literally suffered centuries of injustices? These are two peoples toward which history has a heavy debt; two peoples that long for their land, their independence and their security; two peoples that use the same words to salute each other: *Chalom, Salam*; two peoples that, each in its own way, were the scapegoats of political or hegemonic ambitions.

On November 29, 1947, after the greatest human tragedy of all times, the Holocaust, the United Nations decided that Palestine would be divided into two countries, one Jewish—which was already occupied by a majority of Jewish people, contrary to a popular myth—and the other one Arab.

It is sadly ironic that in 2002, 55 years later, the UN is adopting another resolution, Resolution 1397, which affirms the ideal of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side and respecting safe and recognized borders. This is an admission of failure since the UN must essentially pass the same resolution half a century later.

But how can this resolution be implemented as long as terrorism holds the upper hand? What pressure will persuade Chairman Arafat to denounce terrorism?

In my view, terrorism cannot be divided into good and bad. There is only one form of terrorism, and that is the one that kills blindly. Since when has terrorism been an instrument of peace? How can we not fight against terrorism in the Middle East when we fight against terrorism in Afghanistan?

In the past few years, the failure of the Camp David peace negotiations and the attacks carried out in order to derail the peace process have revived the fear of disappearing, the spectre of anti-Semitism.

What pressure can be brought to bear to restore hope and trust to the crowd of Israelis who took part in the peace rally organized in Tel Aviv by the *Shalom Akhchav*, or peace now, movement on November 4, 1995, the fateful day when Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated? Demonizing Israel will certainly not achieve that goal.

I support the demand issued to Ariel Sharon to withdraw his troops from Palestinian cities on the West Bank.

But all this will have been in vain if it simply gives terrorism an even freer hand. This is why I also, and simultaneously, support the demand issued to Chairman Arafat to immediately bring to an end the acts of terrorism committed on behalf of the cause he represents.

The advanced social disintegration and injustice from which the Palestinian people are suffering, and which I recognize, and for which the entire region must assume a share of responsibility, will not be resolved by the action of kamikazes. There will be no military or violent solution to this conflict. It is a political conflict whose solution can only be political.

*S. O. 52*

• (2155)

I urge the House and I urge Mr. Arafat to reread his own letter, the one he wrote to Yitzhak Rabin on September 9, 1993. He mentioned, and I quote:

• (2200)

[*English*]

The PLO commits itself to the Middle East peace process, and to a peaceful resolution of the conflict between the two sides and declares that all outstanding issues relating to permanent status will be resolved through negotiations.

[*Translation*]

I also invite the other countries in the region to subscribe to these principles, particularly those that are financing and openly supporting the acts of terrorism.

I would also call upon the heads of the two factions, that is the heads of Palestine and of Israel, to take their inspiration from article III 1 of the Israel-Egypt peace treaty, which reads as follows:

[*English*]

The Parties...recognize and will respect each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence;(b) They recognize and will respect each other's right to live in peace within their secure and recognized boundaries; (c) They will refrain from the threat or use of force, directly or indirectly, against each other and will settle all disputes between them by peaceful means.

[*Translation*]

I will close by quoting the words spoken by Yitzhak Rabin mere minutes before he was assassinated:

Without partners for peace, there can be no peace. We will demand that they do their part for peace, just as we will do our part for peace, in order to solve the most complicated, prolonged, and emotionally charged aspect of the Israeli-Arab conflict: the Palestinian-Israeli conflict

Before even giving any thought to a technical solution, I would invite the parties to take inspiration from this message from Yitzhak Rabin and to open the door to the U.S. initiatives. Not to do so will condemn our children and the generations after them to continue to suffer helplessly in a never-ending war.

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I was delighted to hear that you had acceded to the request for the emergency debate we are having tonight on the crisis in the Middle East. This request was made yesterday by my colleague from Mercier, our foreign affairs critic. First, I would like to congratulate her on this initiative and on the speech she made tonight. Her speech sought balance and peace.

I would like to advise you that I will be sharing my time with the member for Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, who will speak immediately after me. He too thinks he has important things to say.

Second, I would like to say that if I am taking part in this debate tonight it is not because of my personal experience or because I know people on both sides, but rather as a member of the Sub-Committee on Human Rights and International Development of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Rights are extremely important to me. Unfortunately, however, these days, and for some time now, human rights have been and are being trampled by both sides in the Middle East.

I would like to focus on the rights of displaced people and the problems they face. Even if I am not as well versed in history as my colleague from Mercier, I believe that at this point in time and after several speeches, it is appropriate to point out a few historical facts.

First, the territory now occupied by the Palestinians and the Israelis has been the scene of many conflicts dating back to at least 2000 BC. So things go back a long way. It is a long-standing conflict. Other areas in the world have also experienced conflicts. It is not the only one. It is, however, fair to say that this area has a special tradition when it comes to conflicts.

The territory in question, especially the city of Jerusalem, saw the birth of three major religions: Catholicism, of course, Judaism and Islam. However, the idea of a Jewish state goes back to 1896 and comes from Theodor Herzl, who wrote on the subject. The concept was being discussed at the time and he wrote about it.

In those days, the Palestinian territory was under the Ottoman Empire. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Great Britain occupied and administered this territory. It was a more extensive territory though. After World War II and the Holocaust, which the Jews remember today—nobody can deny this genocide, which I too deplore, because it is an event in history nobody would wish to any people—the Israeli-Palestinian issue was brought before the UN in February 1947.

We have the feeling that the international community, though perhaps not out of guilt, wanted to do something to make up for certain lack of action during World War II. Several months of discussion ensued during which a former Prime Minister of Canada, Lester B. Pearson, had a prominent and influential role. He played a crucial role before the adoption by the UN General Assembly of resolution 181(11), which partitioned the Palestinian territory into eight areas, in which Israel was to be included. Three zones were given to the Jews, and three to the Arabs. The city of Jaffa was to be an Arab city, and Jerusalem was to be under international control.

• (2205)

But the situation degenerated. War broke out between the two parties in 1948. Fleeing before the Israeli army, Arab populations from Palestine sought refuge beyond the borders. In 1949, the number of refugees reached 725,000.

In December 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 194-3, which stated that refugees wishing to return home and live in peace with their neighbours should be authorized to do so as soon as possible, and that compensation should be provided in payment for property or for damages to the property of those who did not wish to return.

An analogy can be made with situations we have experienced here. It is not entirely comparable, but it explains what happens when people are forced to move outside their region, or lose their property. This situation can be compared to that of Mirabel, where people were expropriated. There is also the case of Forillon park. Quebecers who are watching will tell us that those who experienced this experienced hardship and anxiety.

S. O. 52

In the Middle East, the hardship and anxiety are over more than money: it is about their very existence, about their lives. From 1948 to 1960, the issue of Palestinian refugees came up every year at the UN.

The reason I am dwelling on this important aspect of displaced persons is to explain that this type of situation is a breeding ground for terrorism. I cannot accept terrorism, and I believe that parliamentarians do not accept it either, but it is an important fact.

Because I am running out of time, I will leave out the more recent history. Everyone knows that they have reached a deadlock in the region. Unfortunately, with the current parties involved in the conflict, it is difficult to foresee a solution resulting from bilateral negotiations. We cannot simply put the two parties together and hope for the best. The international community needs to act.

Was it not, incidentally, the international community that allowed the two peoples to exist, Israelis, the Jews, and Palestinians? I believe that by accepting this principle, we must denounce the Government of Canada's approach of sitting on the sidelines, content to follow the Americans.

However, the value of that initiative and its importance for the future must be recognized. I do not wish to criticize, but at the same time, on April 5, at the human rights commission in Geneva, Canada was one of two countries that opposed the sending of a mission to observe the situation in Palestine and in the surrounding area. Canada objected, and that did not look good. Canada should redeem itself.

Given the inalienable right of Israel to exist and the right of Palestinians to a viable state, there is no military solution to this conflict. Dialogue and negotiation alone will lead to peace.

Terrorism, whatever its origin, must be denounced. The Palestinian authority and Yasser Arafat must play an essential role in resolving this situation.

In the short term, Israel must heed the calls of the United States, the European Union and many other countries and it must comply with UN resolutions 1402 and 1403. It must also stop Operation Protective Wall and withdraw from Palestinian cities.

● (2210)

The Palestinian authority must also do its part, by officially condemning suicide bombers and other terrorists, while the United Nations must seriously consider deploying an international peace-keeping force.

Canada must promote the idea of an international peacekeeping force and continue to fight for a fair solution to this problem. In a conflict, there are often two versions of the facts and responsibility on both sides. The government must strongly object to the use of excessive force and terrorism by both parties. The Prime Minister must also take the opportunity afforded to him by his current tour to ensure that Canada's voice is heard, and parliament must be used to support the voice of the government on the international scene.

**Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as it happens, this emergency debate is taking place today, April 9, which is *Yom Hashoah*. This is the day of remembrance of the Holocaust, in which six million men, women

and children had their lives taken from them simply because they were Jews.

I would like to begin by congratulating the hon. member for Mercier for proposing this emergency debate, which I believe is of vital importance.

As we know, the situation in the Middle East is excessively complicated. It is very hard to understand. To gain a better grasp of it, I think it is important to give a bit of historical background.

In 1947, as has been said already, the United Nations voted for the division of the then Palestine, which was under British mandate, into two states: an Arab state of Palestine and a Jewish state. The Jews under David Ben Gurion accepted this partition, this division. The Arabs, on the other hand, rejected it, and the armies of five countries invaded a state that did not yet exist, refusing to accept this partition and the creation of a Jewish state.

In 1948, Israel proclaimed its independence, and the only democratic state in the region was created. Israel's status as the only democratic state in this region is as true today, 50 years after partition, as it was at the time.

In 1967, during the Six Day War, the Israeli army engaged in a defensive action to fight off three countries that were preparing to invade and took possession of what are today known as the occupied territories, that is the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

In 1973, on the holiest of the Jewish holy days, *Yom Kippur*, the forces of three countries invaded Israel. The Israeli army, in a series of surprise moves, was able to repel the invaders and even to take possession of the Sinai.

A mere four years after that war, after this attack on the holiest of the high holy days in the Jewish calendar, Israel recognized the principle of land for peace. In the late 1970s, it accepted the Camp David agreements. It withdrew from the Sinai and forced the Jewish settlements to be dismantled. Even then, Israel was prepared to give up land for peace. I would remind hon. members that this peace treaty was signed by a Prime Minister of the right, Menachem Begin.

Since then, however, the situation has remained tense. In 1993, the Oslo process brought a glimmer of hope. Both parties recognize the facts, which are hard to deny: there are two peoples, and these two peoples need to recognize each other if they are to be able to move toward peace.

Yet, since 1993, the situation has constantly deteriorated, even though, under the watch of former President Bill Clinton, the parties had come very close to an agreement in Camp David II. However, Chairman Arafat of the Palestinian Authority rejected the near agreement and left the negotiations table to return to Palestine. Shortly after, the second Intifada was launched.

Since then, innocent civilians, men, women and children on Israeli and Palestinian sides have lost their lives in a cycle of infernal and unacceptable violence for the international community and for the two communities involved. What, then, can we do?

*S. O. 52*

The first thing to do is to acknowledge some basic principles which will guide the action of the Canadian government and that of the international community: first, recognize the inalienable right of existence of Israel within borders which are safe and recognized. This is essential if we want to move forward.

• (2215)

Incidentally, I recall that the narrowest part of the Israeli territory is a mere eight miles across. This would not provide safe borders if a hostile army were to invade Israel.

The second basic principle is the right of Palestinians to a viable and independent state. The third principle is that there will be no military solution to this conflict. And the fourth principle which should guide our action and the action of the international community is that terrorism is unacceptable.

What should we do now? Two things which go hand in hand must be done immediately. First, pursuant to United Nations resolutions 1402 et 1403, end Operation Protective Wall launched by Tsahal, the Israeli army, and withdraw from Palestinian towns. This is what is required from Israel; A concomitant demand is placed upon Palestinians to end terrorism as a result of the unequivocal condemnation of terrorism as totally unacceptable.

Yasser Arafat and other Palestinian leaders have to declare in English and Arabic, to the whole world and to their own people, that suicide attacks and all terrorist attacks are totally unacceptable. These two obligations go together.

Now, in the middle and long term, negotiations should resume on the basis that was accepted by both parties, that is the Tenet plan, named after the director of the CIA, and the Mitchell report, named after a former U.S. senator. To that end, the international community should not shy away from a more formal and a deeper involvement, which can take several forms. It could send observers, or an implementation force, or hold an international conference, for example, but the international community cannot afford to stay on the sidelines. It should get involved because, day after day, civilians, innocent people, women, men and children are losing their lives in a horrible way.

To conclude, we know the outline of a potential accord which both parties might accept. This was sketched out at Camp David II, when Yasser Arafat, Ehud Barak, and Bill Clinton tried to negotiate. It was also discussed shortly after that in Tabah, Egypt.

These principles should guide this government, because we just cannot stay on the sidelines when, day after day and night after night, civilians are being killed in a conflict that could have been settled if only the Camp David II accords had been accepted two years ago.

• (2220)

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia.

Human life is sacred, as is the right to human life. This is true for Canadians, and it is true for the French, the Chinese, the Germans, or the Indians. It is also true for the Israelis and the Palestinians.

The cycle of violence we are witnessing daily on television shakes us to the core of our being. What we are seeing is innocent children, mothers, and seniors, both on the Israeli side and on the Palestinian side.

It shakes us because each lost human life is an attack against our fundamental and collective freedoms, against each one of us, wherever and whoever we are.

It is unacceptable that innocent people are paying with their lives for a cause, because of brutal terrorism on one side and an army of occupation on the other. Armies and terror never resolve anything. In fact, history is full of lessons of the strongest armies having to give way before the freedom of individuals.

Canada's history in the defence of rights and freedoms in the Middle East is eloquent. In 1947, we were one of the major countries that supported resolution 181 creating Israel and also gave the right from that moment on for a Palestinian state, a Palestinian people, with its own borders.

After the 1948 war, we were also involved in calling for international control of Jerusalem and undertaking the first assistance to those in the refugee camps.

In 1956, after the Suez war, Lester B. Pearson, from a modest country like Canada, succeeded in convincing the nations of the world of the role of a peacekeeping force, which has now become an essential component of international politics. It won Mr. Pearson the Nobel prize.

In 1967, we were involved in resolution 242, which called on Israel to return to its borders.

In 1973, after the Arab war against Israel, we sent peacekeeping forces to the Sinai and to the Golan Heights. In fact, we still have peacekeeping forces in the region.

In 1991, we were involved in the Madrid accords, which led to the Oslo accords approximately three years later.

[*English*]

We came so close to a settlement and had it not been for the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, there might not have been the need for this debate tonight. The hopeful days of Yitzhak Rabin seem so many light years away. The violence and disregard for human life have reached the savage and frightening crescendo which we watch with horror night after night.

The solution lies in the acceptance of these few points. There is no possible result by suicide bombers, no matter how many and no matter for how long. It will never work. There is also no possible result of success with an occupation army sending tanks and gunships that destroy everything in their passage, that destroy homes and cars and all possessions and also kill people at random in refugee camps and other places.

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• (2225)

Israel has a right to exist, a right that must not be violated. It must have secure borders and be guaranteed its existence in peace and security. At the same time, Palestine also deserves to live, to live within secure borders, to be established as an ongoing country with all its integrity. That means therefore the settlements have to cease and be disbanded. Also the question of the refugees who have lived in refugee camps for 50 years also has to be settled.

I support the actions of the foreign affairs minister. He is seeking the power of monitoring for Canada. He wants Canada to be present in the evolution of a possible settlement in the Middle East.

I know we are a modest power. I realize we have modest military means and modest economic means in relation to the world at large. We cannot do anything by ourselves. At the same time, we have a huge moral stature in the world. We are highly respected as a country. We can play an immense role as a trusted link between our immediate neighbour and key player, the United States, whom we know and who trusts us, and the other key players, the European Union and indeed the Arab world as well.

I was at a meeting this afternoon where the president of the German Bundestag was present. The subject of the Middle East occupied the whole meeting. It came out that many present reflected the opinion of many people which I hear day in and day out, from my own children for instance. They think that a solution to the Middle East situation is impossible. They feel it will go on and on with the Israelis on one side and the Palestinians on the other, mistrusting each other so much that no settlement is possible.

I wonder if we would have ever believed that the Berlin wall would disappear, that the iron curtain would be dismantled, that the U.S.S.R. at the time this mighty power, would find its demise, that so many people behind the iron curtain would be free one day and are free today. Would we have believed there could be peace in Bosnia, in Kosovo, in Northern Ireland?

We on this side have enormous faith in our new foreign affairs minister. He is a man of peace with a deep conviction in human rights and the belief that human liberty and the freedom of people is paramount. We believe that he has a great opportunity to be the Pearson of the day, to be the peacemaker supreme in this terrible conflict today where Canada stands with a moral stature and integrity second to none.

I urge our foreign affairs minister to carry on in his way to be that peacemaker, to be that peace broker, to be the link between the United States, Europe and the Arab states. I urge him to bring about some sort of recognition in the Middle East that peace will always conquer war, that peace is far bigger than war. Lester Pearson showed us in the Suez crisis that Canada can play an important role. I congratulate the minister for his efforts and urge him to carry on in his peacemaking efforts to ensure that Canada plays an important role in the future settlement of the Middle East situation.

• (2230)

**Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that all members of the House are deeply disturbed by recent events in the Middle East. As member's know, much of tonight's debate has been focused on our

government's reaction to those events and the opposition's criticisms of the government's handling of a very difficult situation. That is as it should be.

However I would like to move away from the headlines and talk about Canada's assistance in the Middle East. It does not make great television pictures but it does go to the core of what we believe.

What do we believe? Canada believes that economic development and peace and security are mutually reinforcing. Two sides of the same coin, they have long been articulated Canadian foreign policy priorities. Many of the most horrific elements of the conflict unfolding daily in the Middle East bear the hallmarks of despair, whereas security and stability attract increased growth.

As trade and investment take root in a solid foundation and linkages across borders bind and fortify an entire region, political, social and cultural life can flourish. Nowhere have these principles been more relevant than in the Middle East. At no time have the economic costs of instability been more glaring than during the 18 months since the outbreak of the current intifada.

Canada's development assistance program in the Middle East countries of Jordan, Lebanon and Palestinian territories reflects the mutual reinforcement of poverty reduction and peace and security. Aimed broadly in support of the Middle East peace process, Canada's program has focused on Palestinian refugees both because they are the most needy communities and in order to complement Canada's role as gavel holder for the multilateral refugee working group.

Two initiatives of particular note are the Canada camp project and the Lebanese scholarship program. The Canada camp project was a successful family reunification program that brought 5,000 refugees back to Gaza after they had been trapped in Sinai when Egypt and Israel made peace in 1978. This involved co-ordinating the efforts of the governments of Israel and Egypt, UNRWA and the Palestinian authority. Canada's leadership not only facilitated a delicate and intricate exercise in co-operation but was successful in leveraging a critical contribution of supporting funds from Kuwait.

In Lebanon, Canada has played a similar role in mobilizing international funding, this time in support of Palestinian women refugees seeking university educations to build a more secure and prosperous future for themselves and their families. At present, 58 young women from difficult economic circumstances are pursuing university studies and we hope that more than double this number happens in the years ahead.

Canadian development programming in the region seeks to create an enabling environment for sustainable development, itself a prerequisite for peace and prosperity. To accomplish that, capacity building of both state and civil society institutions has become a primary goal.

In Jordan, Canada has been a leader in helping to reform the national vocational education system, in particular utilizing Internet communications technology to help create better employment opportunities for young Jordanian graduates.

*S. O. 52*

In Lebanon, economic development has been tackled head on through a capacity building and technology upgrading program with the minister of revenue there. More revenues are being collected more fairly and transparently, building confidence in the public and allowing the government the needed resources to accomplish other social priorities.

Equity issues of access to education and employment opportunity have been addressed in CIDA's Egypt program through focusing on girl child education and small enterprise development.

• (2235)

In the Palestinian territories, we have worked actively with municipalities to improve their planning and governance capacities. The intifada and its accompanying violence has all but halted long term development strategies. Earlier, Canadian efforts to build state institutions responsible for democratic elections, social welfare and environmental protection have been put on hold for now as attention has been redirected to the humanitarian crisis the local population is facing.

As part of its effort to promote better understanding of complex contemporary issues, Canada has funded the creation of the world's first human security centre in Amman, Jordan. The centre provides a venue where serious study of human security issues can take place and provides a venue for their discussion and dissemination. We are hopeful that the Amman human security centre will evolve into a facility to promote the kind of neutral respect and understanding that is so desperately needed in the Middle East today.

Given our half century's history of involvement in efforts to resolve and mitigate the consequences of the longstanding conflict in the Middle East, Canada has a stake in bringing the disastrous phase we are now witnessing to a quick end.

Conflict cannot be resolved through violence. The only path to the peace that the people of the region and the people of Canada crave is through negotiation. Building on the experience we have gained over five decades of involvement we will continue to work for an end to violence, a return to negotiations and for a just and lasting peace.

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the government for initiating this evening of a take note debate on a very special crisis involving virtually the whole world now. I want to reiterate the words of many of the people who have spoken tonight, that we condemn, in the strongest possible words, the violence that is happening in the Middle East.

Much has been said about the resolution of the United Nations. I would like to review some of these resolutions for the listeners who are still awake at this hour of the night

The United States resolution calls upon both parties to move immediately to a meaningful ceasefire and calls for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities. That is to happen immediately. That resolution was passed 10 days ago.

The second resolution reiterates the demand on March 12, 2002 for an immediate cessation of all acts of violence, including all acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction.

The third resolution expresses support for the efforts of the secretary general and the special envoys to the Middle East to assist the parties to halt the violence and to resume the peace process.

It is exactly with regard to the dedication of the delegation and the assignment of the secretary general of the United States to go to work in this particular area.

Sometimes we wonder how these conflicts, these acts of violence actually begin. It goes back to a long time ago when I met a school teacher friend of mine who solved a particular conflict in the schoolyard. Two boys were fighting. When she finally got them separated she asked who had started the fight. One fellow said that it had actually started when the other boy had hit him back.

It takes two people to get involved. They do not forgive each other and the thing escalates.

We have before us a situation where all of us in the world need to recognize that we need to become creative, resourceful and inventive. We need some new ideas. We need to prove that we can make this thing better. We need to dare to seek peace.

If there was one thing that was characterized over the last number of years it was not peace. We have had trouble in Afghanistan, in Russia and all over the world for years and years. We have had two world wars. It is peace that we have been lacking. We need to dare to seek peace.

We need to recognize that the history of the Palestinian and Israeli conflict is a very longstanding one. Its roots are very deep. They involve families and they go back centuries. In fact the conflict goes back to 1948 when the state of Palestine was created. We had a war shortly after that. We have had five wars since then. We have a real conflagration blowing up right now. This is nothing new.

We need a long lasting solution. Can it happen? We need to run on three fronts here: the conflict, the violence and the terrorism which is partly motivated by religion, by politics and by economics. It has now taken on the dimensions of extremists and involves the globe. The conflict is not just military. It has become civilian in nature as well.

This debate needs to be lifted to a higher plane. We cannot simply talk about the destruction of people, the destruction of property and the violence and bloodshed. I think we need to lift it to another plane.

I would like to refer briefly to Thomas Jefferson. He made a very interesting statement years ago that has been quoted by many people, including yourself, Mr. Speaker. He said:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal—

I totally believe there is not a person in this House who does not believe that is true. If that is true, then we must recognize one another and that we do not fight with one another when we do things like that.

S. O. 52

● (2240)

Charles Colson made a very interesting comment in a book entitled *How Now Shall We Live?*. He makes a particular statement that I would like to quote. He says "Virtue is essential to freedom". Freedom of course is necessary to recognize the equality of people. He goes on to say "People who cannot restrain their own baser instincts, who cannot treat one another with civility, are not capable of self government. Without virtue, a society can be ruled only by fear, a truth tyrants understand all too well".

Surely we do not want to govern ourselves by fear. We do not want to be governed by fear. We do not want the Palestinians to be governed by fear. We do not want the Israelis to be governed by fear. We want to be governed by the ability to self-govern, to control our baser instincts so that we can indeed respect one another, trust one another, and live a life at peace with all those around us.

Regarding this conflict, the United States has sent Colin Powell to the Middle East. We notice that the United Nations resolution also recognizes the work and assignment of Colin Powell. Who is Colin Powell? For the benefit for those who perhaps have not had the time to find out who this man is, I would like to refer to a couple of notes I have about him. He is a remarkable man who achieved most of the great diversity in America.

First, he earned many medals in Vietnam, one for saving the lives of soldiers in a helicopter. Second, he was the first African-American to be the chairman for the joint chiefs of staff. Third, he was the first black man to hold the title of president of national security affairs. Finally, his influence in Desert Storm gained him national recognition with his meticulous battle plans. Colin Powell obtained many medals, achieved many goals and helped many people, but probably the most compelling aspect of his character is his determination to achieve said contributions.

That is what he has done in a nutshell, but let me go back a little further. This man was born in New York City on April 5, 1937. He is the son of Jamaican immigrants. He was raised in the south Bronx, educated in New York City public schools and the City College of New York. He received a commission as an army second-lieutenant upon graduation and subsequently received a master of business administration degree from George Washington University.

Here comes the significant part. General Powell served two tours of duty in Vietnam. As a battalion commander in Korea, he later commanded the 2nd brigade, 101st airborne division, that is air assaults, and the V Corps, United States army, Europe. Prior to being named as chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, he served as the commander in chief, forces command, headquartered at Fort McPherson, Georgia.

General Powell has been the recipient of numerous U.S. military decorations, including the Defense Distinguished Service medal, Bronze Star medal and the Purple Heart. His civilian awards include the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Congressional Gold medal, and an honorary knighthood, that is, knight commander of the Bath, from the Queen of England.

This is no ordinary gentleman. That is not bad. I would say that is excellent. In fact he was born in 1937 and is a younger man than I am. He has achieved many things that most people would take

several lifetimes to achieve. This man is now in the midst of this conflict and his task is to see if he can bring together these warring factions.

On April 7, two days ago, in the Middle East news wire two items appeared which I would like to read into the record. The first one says:

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell is due in the region this week on a mission from President George W. Bush. Powell will work toward putting an end to the terror, violence and incitement on the part of the Palestinians, and stopping the Israeli Defense Forces' operation.

Notice the balanced position that this man is creating here. He is not blaming one side or the other. He is not saying that it is anyone's fault that it happened. He is saying that they have to stop this. The other item is out of Tehran. It says:

The recent speech by U.S. President George W. Bush on the Middle East conflict should not be trusted and U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell's impending trip to the region will not bear any fruit nor change the predicament on the ground.

● (2245)

Is this not interesting? What an endorsement of the work this man is supposed to do? That was on April 7. This morning we more news came out of the Middle East news wire. The first item refers to the Via Dolorosa of the Palestinian people. It says:

Abusahlia visitors to the city of Jerusalem are almost certain to walk the famous Via Dolorosa that Jesus Christ walked two thousand years ago carrying the cross. The path tells the story of the last few hours of the life of Jesus through fourteen stages that still exist today as a testimony to the wrath of man against his brother and representing divine love.

Is that not interesting? This is what is happening. I took the time to look at what these 14 stations were. I will not go into detail but I will list them. The first station, Jesus is condemned. The second station, Jesus carries the cross. The third station, Jesus falls. The fourth station, Jesus meets his mother. The fifth station, Simon helps carry the cross. The sixth station, Veronica wipes Jesus' face. The seventh station, Jesus falls a second time. The eighth station, Jesus meets the women. The ninth station, Jesus falls a third time. The tenth station, Jesus is stripped. The eleventh station, Jesus is nailed to the cross. The twelfth station, Jesus dies. The thirteenth station, Jesus is taken down from the cross. The fourteenth station, Jesus is buried.

Another comment came out the Middle East news wire. It says:

The US government has been left looking confused, hypocritical and weak as Secretary of State Colin Powell dawdles through Africa, Europe and Arabia on his way to Israel, urging Arab leaders to rein in Arafat and issuing requests for Israel to withdraw from Palestinian cities.

Notice again the balanced situation there. The next one says:

There is no doubt that the Israeli military invasion of Palestinian territories puts an end to the peace process that has been dying for some time.

This is quite the environment that is being described by the Middle East news wire and into which Colin Powell is placed in trying to create some peace, harmony and co-operation. Powell, and I just read his qualities and his achievements up to this point, also has other qualities. I would like to suggest, as did Peter Legge in his latest book *Who Dares Wins*, that Powell needs to soar with the eagles. He is now working with the top echelons of government so he needs to soar high as the eagles and he is.

*S. O. 52*

This man is also committed to a virtuous life. He has been through the storm and he knows what it is. He has been through battle. He has won a variety of battles. This man knows the characteristics of a war. He knows what makes up victory, what makes up character and what makes up a winning combination.

He also knows that tough times do not last but tough people do, and he is one tough guy. He will rise above the circumstances. He will rise above the storms and he will rise above the adversity and the lack of support that is coming out of the news statements that I just read. He needs to recognize that he will not let tough times control him and that he will rise above them. He has a vision and his vision is peace. Powell is also a guy who does not quit.

I want to refer to a thing that I read just recently about eagles. As members and the foreign minister probably know, that when an eagle soars it has its beak open because it needs its beak to give it direction and to navigate its course. As an eagle grows older the beak, begins to calcify. There are times when that beak closes and the eagle cannot open it again. That eventually brings about the death of the eagle, but not to all eagles.

There are eagles that will find a rock on which to perch themselves and then persist in beating their beaks against the rock until the calcification disappears so they can open them again, and off they fly. It is that kind of persistence that Colin Powell will bring to his negotiations and his involvement there.

● (2250)

Powell also knows that to succeed, the first thing needed to develop trust and confidence is competence. This man has the skills and the experience. However he has something else and that is character. This man stands for something: a value, an ideal, a cause and a mission. He has the courage to take on duty and recognizes that it is more important to do what is right than to do what is personally beneficial.

There is nothing very personally beneficial in getting into a situation that other people say is impossible to win. He is in there and I think this man will win because he has the courage. Above all, he has loyalty. When Powell took over the command, the chief of staff, he said to his people that he knew they could count on him and that he wanted to be able to count on them. He said that they might argue about what action to take but that he would stick by them as they argued as long as they stuck by him once a decision was made. He said that no "cover your butt" moves were necessary from them and that no knife in the back would come from him. That is the kind of man about who we are talking. He has confidence, is selfless, makes sacrifices and has empathy.

Colin Powell on January 20, 2001, when he became the secretary of state, stated at his confirmation hearing that a guiding principle of foreign policy would be "America stands ready to help any country that wishes to join the democratic world". Secretary Powell recently stressed the importance of American leadership in the world. He said:

We are working with the international community and the Afghan people to help them rebuild their country...We are also working with the United Nations to help the Afghans form a new government, one that represents all geographical and ethnic backgrounds, one that will end Afghanistan's role as haven for terrorists and drug dealers, one that will permit reconstruction and allow these millions of refugees to return home in peace and security. One message that leaps out from the events of

September 11th is very clear. American leadership in foreign affairs has never been more important.

That is what this man believes and we know that it is true. That is why I believe the president of the United States has sent him into that conflict centre of the Middle East and said "Look Colin, if anybody here can straighten this out, I think you can". I wish this man much success. The world needs peace. We must support him.

I urge our foreign minister to make it his business to contact Colin Powell and assure him of the support that Canada provides for him. We must pray for this man. We must pray for the leaders, Sharon and Arafat, who are in conflict. Let us examine ourselves and recommit ourselves not only to the pursuit of peace in the world but to the pursuit of virtue and the development of character in our own lives.

As we do so, we will have peace in our lives. As we circulate and have interactions with other people and influence those around us, and the leaders who govern our nation, we will indeed promote the characteristics of peace and encourage others to follow in our footsteps.

May that be the legacy of this foreign minister. May that be the legacy of our Prime Minister. May that be the legacy of each one of us here, serving our constituents, making this world a peaceful place in which to live and helping those who are in conflict to settle their differences and agree to love one another as they ought to.

● (2255)

**Ms. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Mercier for the opportunity to put my thoughts on record on this issue of great importance.

Twelve days ago, like many families around the world, my family and I sat down for a Passover meal. For us it was the first in a community facility. Like others, we celebrated the struggle for freedom and liberation of Jewish peoples around the world. When my family finished the meal and the service we got up from the table and walked away with a sense of well-being and, most important, with a sense of continuity. On that same day in Netanya, other Jewish families sat down for a traditional Passover meal, also in a community facility, many who were not to walk away, many who were to face death, destruction and profound loss.

The war before us is one of horrific proportions. Nothing that we are dealing with in the Middle East is simple. There are no easy answers, there is no place for cheap emotion and there is certainly no place for political grandstanding and posturing. There will be no easy resolution to this torturous impasse, to the heartbreak, to the killing or to the destruction now in progress. There is no easy resolution to the enmity and hatred that are becoming the inheritance of children in both camps. Somehow this impasse must be broken.

Israel is a small piece of land but is of profound historical significance. For over 10,000 years, 11 civilizations called modern day Israel home and today we must secure the future for this small land, for what we face are important issues and truly the survival of the state of Israel.

*S. O. 52*

At the heart of the Palestinian diplomatic struggle against Israel today is the fact that the Palestinians are resisting occupation. We hear repeatedly that the root problem is the Israeli occupation. As I see it, three purposes are served by using these words. A political context is created to explain the Palestinian adoption of violence and terrorism in this current intifada. The demand on Israel to end the occupation does not leave room for compromise.

Most significant, the use of the words occupied Palestinian territories denies any Israeli claim to the land. If the words disputed territories were used, Palestine and Israel would be on an even ground. By presenting Israel as a foreign occupier, the Jewish historical attachment can be delegitimized. Why does the politically loaded term occupation apply only to Israel and not when other territorial disputes are concerned? Kashmir is disputed territory. The Persian Gulf island of the Zubara is described as disputed territory.

The actions of the homicidal bomber at the Passover Seder in Netanya were the actions of a terrorist. Many have said that Mr. Arafat could have exercised maximum control over these terrorists. Of that we cannot be sure, but what we do know is that it is not unreasonable for us to expect him to exercise maximum effort.

What indeed is Mr. Arafat fighting for? He was offered peace. He declined. He was offered a state. He declined. He was offered a part of Jerusalem. He declined. No long term solution will be arrived at by what is happening. The only peace that we will know is the peace of the dead.

• (2300)

Israeli mothers and Palestinian mothers all want a future of hope for their children. Jews throughout Canada and Jews throughout the western world, faced with the convergence of threats on their Jewish homeland, faced with the acts of desecration of holy places, and faced with growing criticism, fear abandonment by and isolation from traditional friends. They fear the unthinkable. Never again, they said.

At the same time, we are moved and profoundly affected by the poverty and pain we see in the faces of Palestinian families. However, as long as families are paid large sums of money by surrounding Arab nations to glorify the martyrdom of their children, peace will not be possible.

Canada recognizes a responsibility to resolve the conflict and recognizes that resolving the conflict ultimately lies with the parties involved getting involved in bilateral negotiations. The armed conflict must end. Resolution 242 is the basis for peace negotiations. Canada fully endorses the findings of the Mitchell report of April 2001. All acts of terrorism are condemned by the Canadian government. Canada both chairs and supports the multilateral refugee working group and supports the bilateral negotiation process, a process for peace.

The Canadian government has committed to working with Canadian community leaders to ensure that their issues are heard, considered and thoughtfully reflected in our decision making processes. The tasks before our government and all governments are onerous, challenging and often overwhelming. Peace will not come while guns are being fired. Peace will not come unless there is talking.

The Middle East has to be fixed. That only begins with the real acceptance by Arab nations of the legitimacy of the state of Israel. The outcome of the war currently under way between Israelis and Palestinians is vital to the security of all of us, to our future as a free society. We must show leadership, we must show patience and we must show commitment to the pre-eminence of peace. The task at hand is too important. As Canadians, as parliamentarians, as citizens, we must work together. I forgot to mention that I am sharing my time with the member for Mount Royal.

**Mr. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I rise to speak I am reminded, particularly because this is Holocaust Remembrance Day, of the reverence for human life. That is why I wish to begin almost by way of prologue with a statement that every person, be they Palestinian or Israeli, Arab or Jewish, is a universe, and the death of any innocent a tragedy.

I rise also to speak not only as the MP for Mount Royal but as a Jew, as one who has been engaged in the struggle for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East for over 35 years, who has family in Israel and friends among the Palestinians, and who has acted as legal counsel to both Israeli and Palestinian human rights NGOs. Accordingly, with this experience in mind, I would like to go behind the daily headlines, which cloud and sometimes corrupt understanding, to probe the real basis for conflict, the root causes, to use the popular metaphor, of conflict in the Middle East and the basis for conflict resolution.

I will organize my remarks around a set of foundational principles for understanding the conflict and for moving toward a just solution, many of which are themselves anchored in the basic principles of Canadian foreign policy in the Middle East.

Principle number one, which successive Canadian governments have described as the cornerstone of Canadian foreign policy in the Middle East, is respect for the security, well-being and legitimacy of the state of Israel. Indeed, this principle is itself rooted in a related notion or principle: the existential nature of the Israeli-Palestinian-Arab conflict. In a word, this is not a conflict about borders, though borders are certainly in dispute. This is not a conflict about territory, although territory is certainly in dispute. It is not a conflict about resources such as water, though resources are certainly in dispute. Nor is this even a conflict about Jerusalem, though Jerusalem is sometimes a metaphor for the existential nature of this conflict.

Simply put, the core of the conflict has been and for the most part continues to be the unwillingness of many among the Palestinian and Arab leadership to accept the legitimacy of Israel's right to exist anywhere in the Middle East.

Historical rejectionist evidence speaks for itself. In 1947 the United Nations recommended the partition of the Palestine mandate into a Jewish state and a Palestinian-Arab state. The Jews accepted the UN resolution. The Arabs rejected it and launched a war that by their own acknowledgement was intended to exterminate the nascent state of Israel.

It should be noted that at the time of this first rejection of a Jewish state there were no Palestinian-Arab refugees, no occupied territories, no settlements. Indeed, this was the beginning of a pattern of double rejectionism: the Arabs rejecting a Palestinian state if that meant having to countenance a Jewish one.

*S. O. 52*

From 1948 until 1967 the West Bank was under the occupation of Jordan, and Gaza under the occupation of Egypt, so that only Arab occupation prevented the emergence of a Palestinian state during this period. In June 1967, again with no Israeli occupation or settlements in occupied territories, Egypt, Syria and Jordan waged a war against Israel, not to establish a Palestinian state but to once again extinguish the Jewish one.

In the Israeli exercise of self-defence, which the UN acknowledged, Israel gained control of the Sinai, the West Bank and the Gaza strip. Israel's offer in the immediate aftermath of that 1967 six-day war to return these newly obtained territories for a peace treaty was met with the triple "no" of the Arab Khartoum declaration: no recognition, no negotiation, no peace with Israel.

The pattern continued through the launching of yet another war of aggression against Israel on Yom Kippur until the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty in 1979 resulted in the return of the Sinai and peace between Israel and Egypt, just as a peace treaty was to be completed with Jordan in 1994.

In a word, therefore, and this is the reading of the Middle East history, fast forward now to the year 2000. It is not the Israeli occupation that has been the root cause of the conflict; rather, it is the rejection of Israel, even at the price of rejecting thereby a Palestinian state, that led to the initial occupation in 1967 and still sustains the less than 5% of the territory yet occupied by Israel as a result of the six-day war. In a word, over 95% of the territory captured by Israel in the exercise of self-defence in the six-day war has been returned within the framework of peace treaties with countries that were prepared to recognize Israel and, in the initial stages of Oslo, which have given Arafat control over 98% of the Palestinian people.

However, in the year 2000 in the Camp David talks and then again in Taba, Arafat rejected a Clinton and Israeli initiated proposal that would have ended what remained of the occupation and would have established an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza with East Jerusalem as its capital. This would have given the Palestinians almost everything that they themselves had been asking for, save for the right of return which, as Palestinian leader Sari Nusseibah put it, would have meant a second Palestinian state in place of Israel.

• (2305)

This would have required of Arafat and the Arab world to finally accept the legitimacy of a Jewish state in the Middle East alongside the 22 Arab states in the region. Arafat not only rejected this proposal, which recalls the refrain that the Palestinians never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity, but as the Arab scholar Fouad Ajami recently put it, Arafat launched a war of terror in the heartland of Israel of which the recent Passover massacre was a real life metaphor.

Principle number two and related existential principle which has emerged as a basic tenet of Canadian foreign policy is that the Palestinians are a people who have legitimate rights and needs, including the right to self-determination and the right, as I myself have been maintaining for more than 30 years, to an independent, democratic, rights protecting state in the Middle East. Only a democratic Palestinian state will protect the authentic Palestinian right to self-determination while affording the best security for Israel.

Israelis have acknowledged their willingness and readiness to negotiate an independent Palestinian state. The core question then is not whether there will be an independent Palestinian state on which Israel is prepared to agree. The question is whether the Arab world is prepared to make room for a single Jewish state alongside 23 Arab states.

Principle number three refers to UN security council resolutions 242 and 338 agreed upon for conflict resolution in the Middle East, a formula sometimes known as the land for peace resolutions. These UN security council resolutions have been further refined and built upon by the Madrid and Oslo process, including the importance of a just solution to the refugee question.

Principle number four is an end to any Arab or Palestinian government sanctioned incitement to hatred and violence. It is this government sanctioned teaching of contempt, this demonizing of the other, this culture of incitement, is where it all begins. In the words of Professor Ajami:

The suicide bomber of the Passover massacre did not descend from the sky; he walked straight out of the culture of incitement let loose on the land, a menace hovering over Israel, a great Palestinian and Arab refusal to let that country be, to cede it a place among the nations, he partook of the culture all around him—the glee that greets those brutal deeds of terror, the cult that rises around the martyrs and their families.

Principle number five is the danger of the escalating globalizing genocidal anti-Jewishness. It is a tragic irony that on the occasion of today's International Holocaust Remembrance Day, where Jews in concert with our fellow citizens remember the worst genocide of the 20th century, international holocaust and genocide scholars warn once again of a genocidal anti-Semitism rearing its ugly head. In particular I am referring to the state and terrorist sanctioned public calls for the destruction of Israel and the murder of the Jewish people which I have documented elsewhere.

Principle number six is terrorism. The deliberate maiming, murder and terrorizing of innocents can never be justified. It is important to recall and reaffirm the foundational principles of international and Canadian counterterrorism law and policy as they apply also to the Middle East. These include that terrorism from whatever quarter for whatever purpose, as the Prime Minister put it, can never be justified; that the transnational networks of super terrorists with access to weapons of mass destruction constitute an existential threat to the right to life, liberty and security of the person; and that freedom from acts of terror, freedom from fear of terror constitute a cornerstone of human security. In the words of our Prime Minister:

There is nothing in our experience that can capture the fear that Israelis live with every hour of every day.

They further include that there is no moral equivalence or similitude between terrorism and counterterrorism, between deliberate acts of terror against civilians and acts of self-defence against terrorists; that support and sanctuary for groups responsible for terrorism, as the foreign minister has put it, is unacceptable; and that counterterrorism must always comport with human rights and humanitarian norms.

Principle number seven is respect for human rights and humanitarian law as a cornerstone for the protection of human security. If human security were an organizing principle of Canadian foreign policy then it is human insecurity which is the most serious dimension of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict today. What is needed therefore is a culture of human rights in place of a culture of hate, a culture of respect in place of a culture of contempt. As the foreign minister put it recently at a meeting of the UN commission on human rights in Geneva, "security is sustainable only in an environment where human rights are protected" including in particular the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

Principle number eight is support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. In accordance with UN security council resolutions Canada supports the progressive extension of the Lebanese government's authority over all of its territory and the withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon.

Principle number nine is the implementation of the Tenet security work plan and Mitchell commission recommendations. Close to a year ago I described in this place a tenuous Israeli-Palestinian ceasefire that hung on a thread and threatened to explode into violence and stated that it was more necessary than ever that the parties adhere to the recommendations of the Mitchell commission. I reiterate these words today with all the urgency that today's situation commands.

• (2310)

The Tenet security work plan and the Mitchell recommendations are a carefully calibrated set of procedures and substantive requirements to end the incitement, terrorism and violence, to proclaim a ceasefire, to enter into mutual confidence building measures and to proceed to negotiations leading to a political settlement.

Principal number ten is confidence building measures, the parliamentary and people to people contributions. I want to associate myself with the initiative represented and mentioned earlier by my hon. colleague from Cumberland—Colchester of an Israeli-Palestinian-Canadian parliamentary peace forum.

Principle number eleven is the end game. UN security council resolution 1397 states: "the vision of a region where two states, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders". For this vision to be reached, the culture of incitement, hate and terror will have to end, as stated by Professor Ajami.

Indeed, that is the core of what Tenet and Mitchell seek to build upon. For that to happen we must realize that saying yes to Palestine means also saying yes to Israel. Otherwise we will have learned nothing from history and will never realize the vision of a peaceful future for all peoples in the Middle East that we all desperately yearn for.

• (2315)

**Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Windsor—St. Clair.

S. O. 52

[*Translation*]

First, I would like to thank the hon. member for Mercier for giving every member the opportunity to take part in this very important debate.

[*English*]

I returned yesterday from the Middle East, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and the occupied territories. In the very few minutes that I have to speak in the House and through the House to Canadians I want to share both what I witnessed and some observations with respect to the future of this tragic part of the world.

There is a humanitarian disaster unfolding before our eyes in the occupied territories. I fear for the future of the people of the occupied territories, the Palestinians and indeed the future of Israel itself.

My colleague from Mount Royal has spoken of security, insecurity and self defence. It is very important that we look at the context of what is taking place today. The squalor, despair and hopelessness of an entire generation that has grown up in refugee camps without any hope for the future, the despair and anguish that those people are feeling today and the fear in cities throughout the occupied territories are a result of the brutality, violence and contempt for international law which the government of Israel is demonstrating in its current military assault on the occupied territories.

All innocent human life must be protected. My colleagues and I have condemned in the strongest possible terms the suicide bombers terrifying Israelis who are out for an evening in the town or celebrating a holy day. That is terror and we condemn it. However the terror of suicide bombers must not be responded to by the terror of Ariel Sharon's tanks, helicopter gunships and soldiers. That is what we are witnessing, the terrorism of the state in all its brutal, raw and violent reality.

I spoke in the Qalandiya refugee camp with those who were victims of this terror. There were young teachers watching television in their home in Ramallah who heard noise downstairs and gunshots ringing out. As they opened the door they saw two of their colleagues, fellow teachers, young Palestinians, innocent, with hopes for the future, who had been shot dead in cold blood by Israeli soldiers. As they looked down and cried out the soldiers kicked their bodies off the stairs and onto the floor below. They then proceeded upstairs, handcuffed these teachers, blindfolded them, beat them repeatedly and over the course of the next week engaged in what can only be described as torture before finally dumping them back at the checkpoint, because of course they were entirely innocent.

In a civilized society, a society which respects its obligations under international law, and my colleague from Mount Royal is well aware of the obligations under the fourth Geneva convention, this is an outrage and the international community cannot stand by and watch this happen.

We know all too well of what is happening in Jenin and throughout the occupied territories with this brutal and violent military assault, cutting off of food, water and electricity, stopping oxygen and medical supplies from entering, and stopping ambulances from rescuing the sick and the injured. This is inhumanity and the world cannot stand by and watch it happen.

*S. O. 52*

● (2320)

The reality is that people are speaking out. I want to pay tribute tonight to those who in Israel and in the occupied territories have given me hope. I speak here of Canadians like Kevin Neish who is there in solidarity in a refugee camp in Bethlehem, volunteers from Oxfam Quebec, or those that I met with in Tel Aviv, 15,000 Israeli people, mainly Jews, rallying on Saturday night against Sharon's war.

The war widows, who for the first time have spoken out, said "No more". They said "In these days of blood, violence and destruction, when women from both sides are widowed and children are orphaned, we call for an end to the cycle of bereavement. The control over another people is leading to unnecessary casualties on both sides and endangering our lives and the moral fabric of Israeli society". They talked of the control.

We must recognize that the illegal occupation must end. Israel must withdraw from the occupied territories. The illegal settlements must be dismantled. Imagine what a young Palestinian must think as they see these settlements doubling since Oslo and at the same time homes being demolished.

What can this lead to? Only to despair and hopelessness.

I want to pay tribute as well to those brave soldiers and reservists who as well have said "No more". I speak here of the group Ometz Lesarev. I speak of Yesh Gvul, Ometz Lesarev, the courage to refuse. Those reservists and a growing number have said they are not prepared to participate in the violence in the occupied territories, soldiers like Staff Sergeant Gil Nemesh who said:

Those terrible things happening in the territories have little to do with the security of Israel and stopping terror. It is all about the settlements. Choking and starving and humiliating millions of people, to provide safety to the settlements.

This must stop. Canada must speak out. I was ashamed and appalled that at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva our government almost alone among all members, only with Guatemala, opposed the sending of a human rights mission to that area. Shame on the Government of Canada.

What should Canada be doing? Canada should be calling, as the leader of my party has urged eloquently, for an international protection force. This would be an area in which Canada could show real leadership, not waiting but calling now for that protection force.

We would not be alone. Indeed, members of the Knesset, Yossi Sarid, the leader of the opposition from Meretz and others have called for that, as have the Jordanians and the Swedes. Where is Canada's voice in speaking out for an international protection force?

As I said, there must be a protection force. Israel must immediately withdraw. There must be emergency humanitarian relief. We have to consider, if the situation deteriorates, the possibility of re-evaluating our relations, both economic and diplomatic, with Israel.

I know my time is limited. I want to conclude by saying that certainly we in Canada condemn any acts of racism, of violence, the attack on a synagogue in Saskatoon for example.

● (2325)

I have been accused of taking sides in this tragic dispute. I want to say yes, I plead guilty. I have taken sides. I take the side of life over death. I take the side of peace over war. I take the side of the oppressed over the oppressor. I take the side of justice over dehumanization and tyranny.

There must be justice and peace for the Palestinian and Israeli people. The occupation and the violence must end. The world must not continue to turn a blind eye to this tragedy.

**Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the motion brought forward by the member for Mercier and the ruling by the Speaker to allow us to have this emergency debate.

Given the lateness of the hour, it is worth noting this evening as opposed to a number of other occasions in the House and elsewhere in Canada, the measured tones we have heard from all members, with very few exceptions, and all parties. I congratulate members of the House for their approach to the debate because it is so urgent but also so important that we speak in those measured terms.

Before I go to the specific issues I would like to address around the Middle East and specifically Palestine, I would like to address some comments about democratic discourse in the country. I could not help but feel the pain of Michelle Landsberg. In her article in the *Toronto Star* this past weekend she expressed therein the feelings of a woman who has come out of the Jewish community but who in fact regularly has opposed positions taken by the Israeli government and equally and very strongly has taken positions against the Palestinian administration and some of the other Arab governments in the Middle East. She also reflected on the outright discrimination and the attacks that she has faced at times.

That is a bit of a microcosm of what happens in Canada. I have seen it happen in the last few weeks to those of us who have spoken out against the violence on both sides and then have been attacked by the other side. That is not acceptable in Canada.

Therefore, I try to reach out this evening to both the Jewish and Arab communities in Canada to tell them to strive for what is best in Canada as far as democratic discourse. Both those communities have a responsibility in Canada to provide leadership but also to reach out with a sense of co-operation to the other community to try to take a message back to the Middle East, back to Palestine, back to Israel to say that violence is not acceptable. It is not acceptable in Canada where, with every opportunity, we condemn it. Similarly violence in Israel and Palestine is to be condemned. It is not a methodology to resolve their differences.

The role Canada has to play is quite straightforward. We have to say to Israel, as I believe we have, that it is an absolute that we as a country will do whatever we have to do to guarantee its continued existence. Similarly, we have to say to the Palestinians that they have a right to their territory, to their sovereign nation and that we as a country will do whatever is necessary to see them achieve that goal.

*S. O. 52*

The United Nations and the world promised that to both those communities in 1948. It is now in excess of 50 years and that still has not been accomplished. Earlier today I printed from the Internet a chronology of the history of Palestine since that proclamation in 1948 by the United Nations. It runs on for pages and pages.

• (2330)

What was so telling as I analyzed the history in more detail was how often steps were made to bring that area of the world to peace. It would seem every time those communities got close to that, something would happen.

Anwar Sadat reached out with Menachem Begin and said "We are going to take a step forward. We are going to try to resolve some of the problems". Shortly thereafter Anwar Sadat was assassinated by people from his own community.

Yitzhak Rabin led what can only be described as the peace movement within his own government and made very significant strides toward resolving a number of the major issues. Within months, at a peace rally, he was assassinated by a member of his community.

We could stop and look at those two incidents and say that there is no hope, that every time there is a step forward, there is an assassination or violence breaks out. However, if we look at the whole history over the last 54 years, the reality is there have been steps forward.

I can remember when I was graduating from law school. At that time the PLO seemed to be a minor group on the world stage off fighting for its homeland. The reality 20-odd years later is that it was there, it was in its homeland. There have been very significant steps since the fighting that broke out in 1948. To say there is no hope is to be cynical and pessimistic.

There is a role that Canada needs to play at this time, right now, this week, this month. We need to say that we will do whatever we can to foster that hope, to continue the process, to achieve that security we promised, and I believe guaranteed, with all our support to Israel and to the Palestinians so that they can exist in secure settings and in peace.

I want to reiterate the importance of the things we have to do. Major reconstruction will be required. We have to provide all the facilities that we are capable of as a country around the negotiations that will have to be carried out.

I will finish by saying that as a country, we have to continue to say to Israel "You are wrong. We are supportive of you but you are wrong on this. Withdraw from the occupied territory". Equally we have to say and say it forcefully "We condemn the use of suicide bombers".

We have a role to play. Given our ability to do that, we can continue to foster at least some hope in that area of the world that is so troubled.

• (2335)

**Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this important debate and I am proud to be part of a government that is working to help de-escalate one of the most dangerous situations the world has faced for many

years. We, Canada, condemn the cowardly terror bombings of innocents. While we support Israel's right to defend itself we, like our American friends, have called upon Israel to withdraw from Palestinian cities.

Let us make no mistake. Canada is a friend to Israel. Canada was one of the first countries to recognize the state of Israel in 1948. We have been steadfast in our support for its legitimate right to exist within safe and secure borders, just as we have been supportive of the aspirations of the Palestinians to a viable, secure and democratic state.

Good friends need to talk straight to each other. Our foreign affairs minister has done just that and I congratulate him. Straight talk is what good friends are for.

There are people here and outside the Chamber who would have Canada take a stronger position, favouring one side or the other. Cheerleaders are not helpful. Canada is a player on the world stage. We should never be simply cheerleaders, particularly not in a situation filled with such horror, violence and despair. That is not the Canadian way. Nor are fire bombings of synagogues or defaced mosques. Such recurring acts around the world, and sadly even here in Canada, are reminders of hate and fear. Obviously and sadly we have not learned from the lessons of history.

There are those in this country who would use the events in the Middle East to spread hate and fear in Canada. We must never let those who carry hate in their hearts succeed. We believe that freedom from terror can only be brought about at the negotiating table. Peace has never entered a doorway with a pipe bomb or a room through the barrel of a gun.

In all the positions and actions we have taken Canada's goal has been to contribute to peace. Over many years Canada has had a balanced approach in the Middle East. That is why we helped remove the infamous Zionism equals racism resolution at the United Nations. That is why we spoke out against those who tried to dishonour history and smear the state of Israel at the recent Durban conference. That is why Prime Minister Sharon, Foreign Minister Peres and President Katzav have repeatedly thanked Canada for its support.

Even now Canada's delegation to the United Nations human rights convention in Geneva is working to ensure that Israel is not wrongly singled out in the international forum.

Canada has always tried to be helpful in the Middle East. We are a small country but we play an important role as peacekeeper and peacemaker. We are respected on the world stage. We are very often called upon to act as a go-between and a facilitator.

On a personal level I know that I and many Canadians are worried about the safety of our friends and family. I assure my constituents in the riding of Thornhill that their concerns and their hopes are understood, expressed and heard.

Canada believes and I believe that all people have a right to peace and security and should never have to live under a threat of terror. These are the principles that must guide us in these difficult days ahead.

S. O. 52

• (2340)

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, 52 years ago today, on April 9, 1948, the Deir Yassin massacre took place. During a whole day on April 9, 1948, Jewish soldiers killed a vast number of Palestinians in a cold and premeditated way.

This is what Israeli author Simha Flapan wrote in *The Birth of Israel*, and I quote:

[English]

Referring to the attackers, it read:

—lined men, women and children up against the walls and shot them...the ruthlessness of the attack on Deir Yassin shocked Jewish and world opinion alike, drove fear and panic into the Arab population, and led to the flight of unarmed civilians from their homes all over the country.

[Translation]

The Deir Yassin massacre, as scores of others that took place during the so-called Israeli War of Independence in Lydda, Ramle, Doueimah, Qibya, Kafr Kassem, all the expulsions, the destruction of homes, summary arrests, torture and mutilation, all these acts of violence perpetrated more than half a century ago against Palestinians by the founders of Israel, have they brought peace and security to Israel? No, they have not.

All the territories that have been confiscated and occupied by Israel since 1967, all the settlements built in the occupied territories over the past 30 years in blatant violation of international law, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 causing the death of tens of thousands of innocent victims and several billion dollars in damages, the Sabra and Shatila massacres under Sharon, all these illegal and criminal violent acts, have they brought peace and security to Israel? The answer is no.

We can rest assured that the terror campaign waged by Israel right now against scores of Palestinian town will not secure peace and security. On the contrary, Sharon and his army are sowing more hatred and determination among their victims.

By turning a deaf ear to the UN security council, the American government, the European Union, the Vatican and indeed the whole world, Sharon and his associates are turning Israel into a rogue state, a state that has no respect for friends or foes, a state that relies solely on the use of brutal force for its survival.

This strategy will lead nowhere and, unfortunately, it will backfire against its authors and its supporters in the Middle East and throughout the world. There will not be security for Israel and there will not be peace in the region until Israel withdraws from the territories it has occupied since 1967, until it recognizes the right of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees to return and until issues such as Jerusalem, the settlements, water and many more are solved in a fair and equitable manner through negotiation.

I invite those who are searching for the cause of the acts of desperation and violence committed by some Palestinians to look closely at the unbearable reality of the occupation that has been going on for decades and the terror it creates every day for these people.

We can and we must condemn acts of violence that make innocent civilian victims, but we must do it for both sides: for the Palestinian suicide bombers, but also for the Israeli troops and Israeli settlers who also kill Palestinian civilians.

But most importantly, we must do whatever we can to find a political solution to the problems that cause all this violence instead of making them worse.

[English]

On February 3 Chairman Arafat published his vision of peace in the *New York Times*. Let me quote him:

First let me be very clear. I condemn the attacks carried out by terrorist groups against Israeli civilians. These groups do not represent the Palestinian people or their legitimate aspirations for freedom. They are terrorist organizations. I am determined to put an end to their activities. No degree of oppression and no level of desperation can justify the killing of innocent civilians.

• (2345)

[Translation]

What did Israel do in response to Arafat's condemnations and commitments? It isolated Arafat, it deprived him of all his means, it humiliated him and it confined him to Ramallah. Israel ignored the peace proposals put forward by the Saudi Arabians and adopted by the Arab summit in Beirut. Sharon challenged the whole world, he fired on ambulances, churches, mosques, to the point where one could believe that he is looking for some kind of final solution to the Palestinian issue.

According to today's *Jerusalem Post*, even Shimon Peres has said that the Israeli army's operations in the Jenin refugee camp were a massacre. Even Israel's dear friend and close ally, President Bush, has said "Enough is enough".

Canada's official position is clear: the violence between the two sides must stop, and Israel must withdraw from the occupied territories. We support UN resolutions 1397 and 1402, the Tenet plan and the Mitchell report. We object to unilateral actions, such as the settlements, that could adversely affect future negotiations. In my opinion, we must consider, as additional measures, recalling of our ambassador to Israel for consultations, and suspending or reducing our economic and free trade activities with Israel.

We must also consider taking part in an international mission responsible for obtaining an immediate ceasefire, assessing the damage suffered by the parties and getting the negotiations back on track. We must consider strengthening our humanitarian assistance programs for the victims of these barbaric acts.

I will conclude by reminding the House that the day that is about to end in a few minutes is dedicated to the memory of the Holocaust, and I join all the hon. members who, in the course of this debate, have condemned recent acts of anti-semitism committed in Canada or elsewhere. In my opinion, it is not by targeting Jewish cemeteries, synagogues or people of Jewish origin that will make progress on this issue, quite the contrary.

I would also ask our friends of Jewish origin or religion to distance themselves from the current strategy of the Sharon government, which is based on brute force and fait accompli.

*S. O. 52*

As Canadians, regardless of our political allegiance, our origin or our religion, we have something more important to do than to side with the Israelis or the Palestinians: we have to side with peace, with a just peace resulting from an honourable compromise between the parties. We must dare to act purposefully, with the support of the international community, to trigger a negotiated solution, a solution that will ensure the recognition, in a safe environment, of the Palestinian and Israeli states. We must do so before the situation degenerates into an international conflict, the consequences of which would be unpredictable.

[*English*]

**Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it has been an interesting evening as members on all sides of the House have entered into the debate to discuss a very difficult and tragic set of circumstances occurring in the Middle East in and around Jerusalem, the Holy City, the city cherished by three of the world's largest religions.

As I have I have entered into the debate rather late, I think we have heard just about everything already. I see the minister agrees with me. I compliment the minister for staying through all these long hours of debate.

It has been an evening to consider the terrible events that are happening: the conflict and bloodshed, the bombs, the rockets, the bullets and the tanks. These are not pleasant things to describe and they are certainly horrors to live through.

We heard members describe the history of the Middle East beginning in 1948. We heard members describe the war in 1948. As Israel announced its declaration of independence it was attacked simultaneously by at least five surrounding nations. We heard about war in 1956 and again in 1967, the so-called six day war. We heard about 1973 when Israel was attacked on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year, the day of atonement, when Israeli's are at home, buses are not running and transportation is down. It is the day when Israelis consider their eternal relationship with God and their future in the coming year.

We heard about the war in 1982 relating to the invasion, as it was called, into south Lebanon. I did not hear it tonight but it may have gone back even further to 1917 with the Lord Balfour declaration which talked about a Jewish homeland. A modern miracle took place in 1948 when a people, a nation, which had not been a nation on its own terrain for many centuries, even millennia, re-appeared.

We heard horrors tonight about suicide bombers, about desperate people and about a young, beautiful Palestinian girl strapping a bomb to herself to blow people up. One might not be able to contemplate the kind of horror that would drive a person to do such a thing to themselves and to others. We heard descriptions of the horrible event that happened in Netanya. While people were celebrating passover, the day on which Jewish people gather to celebrate their deliverance from bondage in Egypt, as we read in the Bible, a suicide bomber blew them up. These are horrible things to contemplate.

I did not hear it tonight but it was also shocking to hear on the news just recently that during passover the ancient blood libel was still being perpetrated by some haters of Israel. Some Jewish members in the House tonight talked how they gather in their homes

with their families during passover to remember events and to celebrate the season. I find it outrageous that others would portray this celebration as one where Jewish people actually kill the children of Christians or Muslims and drink their blood. It is outrageous to think that this kind of blood libel is still being spread, as it has been recently in the press, by some who have chosen to make enemies and will not be placated. This kind of hatred is hard to understand.

We heard reference to many of the leaders involved in this dispute, which has gone on for so many years, and references to Mr. Sharon, the prime minister. We heard one member call Mr. Sharon an expansionist for his incursions going back to the 1982 experience and now with what is happening in the territories.

● (2350)

We heard descriptions of our fight against terrorism that the world engaged in after the shocking events of September 11 that affected everyone certainly in this country and I think around the world. We can only contemplate the kind of minds that would consider commandeering an aircraft and slamming it into a building occupied by thousands of people and leading to thousands of deaths including the deaths of those who perpetrated the crimes.

Canada's response to September 11, as the United States mobilized for a war against terrorism, was to stand alongside our American neighbours and British colleagues to combat terrorism on an international scale and to bring this scourge of terrorism to an end. After all the months since September 11 and the mobilization that followed thereafter, that operation is still underway, chasing al-Qaeda remnants in Afghanistan and even the contemplated actions against Iraq and Saddam Hussein. Yet when Israel responds to the terrorist and suicide bombings it is expected to deal with that in a matter of days and pull out. We heard some members equate that to a double standard but I think we can all agree that it is a horrible situation.

I do not think there are any easy answers. One of the solutions presented today was that Canada should call for everyone to just stop fighting, that Israel should pull out and that the Palestinians should stop bombing people. I also heard members suggest that we are respected internationally and that we have such respect on the international scene that some people actually think the fighting would stop if our Prime Minister would go over there. It is nice to contemplate these things and suggest it might be that way but I do not think the solutions will come that easily. This is a very complicated conflict that has gone on for a long time.

We heard reference to Oslo, to Mr. Rabin and to Mr. Arafat. We heard talk of 200,000 settlers since the Oslo process began. One member suggested that the solution would be for a multinational security force to go in and separate the parties. Another member suggested the solution would be to declare Jerusalem an international city. The member from Burnaby talked about his recent experiences in Ramallah as he tried to put himself between the fighting forces, somewhat naively thinking that might somehow bring about a resolution.

*S. O. 52*

I want to share with members some of my own experiences over the last 20 years. It has been nearly 20 years since my first trip to Israel and the Middle East. I had the privilege of travelling numerous times to the Holy Land, to Egypt, to what we call Israel today. I have travelled through Jordan and into Lebanon. On one occasion I drove right through what some call the trouble areas of today in a rented Israeli car. I drove through Jenin, through Nablus, through Ramallah and up to Jerusalem from Galilee. I was glad to have had that experience in the early eighties. Although it was under Israeli control at the time, it was possible for me as a tourist in a rented car to drive safely through those cities.

I have been in Bethlehem many times with tour groups. I have led many tourists through the Middle East in my former life, another era when I lived back here in Ontario before moving to the west coast. I had time at that time in my career to take tourists to Israel and to the Middle East. We used to go regularly to Bethlehem. The shops were busy and people were employed. The shopkeepers were always trying to draw our members into their shops, and they were prosperous and drove Mercedes. The employees at the four and five star hotels we stayed in were mostly Arab people who came from the surrounding areas of Jerusalem, or what we would call today the West Bank area or Judea.

● (2355)

It was quite possible and peaceful to go to Bethlehem. Our tour buses loaded and unloaded around the Church of the Nativity in Manger Square where the bullets had been flying. We went through the very low door into that great and ancient church, probably one of the oldest surviving churches in the world. It survived the period of Suleiman the Magnificent and the Muslim conquest of Jerusalem. They did not destroy that one. Interestingly enough they found pictures of the Magi on the front of the church and it is believed that was the reason they did not destroy that church as were so many others during that period in history. This area of terrain has quite a history.

I come from Vancouver Island and the state we are talking about is smaller than the island I live on. It is hard to consider having enemies who would bomb, shoot or fly rockets living in such close proximity. It is one thing to sit in Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver or the big cities in the west and talk about separating these people but it is another thing to realize the very close proximity, the small distances involved and the geographic challenges that presents.

The issue in the Middle East is very complicated. I can describe to members an experience I had in 1990 while visiting an Arab pastor whom I had met in North America. He invited me to share with his congregation on a Sunday evening. This was in 1990 during the period of the first intifada. While I was sharing with the congregation, which consisted of about 25 or 30 young people, in came three men wearing ski mask like hoods over their heads. One of them carried an olive branch, one carried the outlawed PLO flag at the time and the other one carried a picture of a slain man from the village who had been killed in an altercation with Israeli forces earlier that week.

They came in during the service while I was talking and the pastor was interpreting into Arabic. They placed these things in front of the pulpit, turned around, stood for a moment and then walked out. I

waited and no one said anything so I went on with my remarks. Afterward I asked what this meant. It meant that if Israeli forces were to enter the church at that point and see the emblems placed there, they would assume it was a PLO meeting because PLO emblems were present. Since the soldiers would not know what was going on they could have shut the church down permanently. On the other hand, if the pastor had removed the emblems anyone in the church could have been an informer and the pastor would have been found later with his throat cut. I would say that this is the kind of difficulty and pressure that our Arab friends and brothers are under in this difficult conflict.

On another occasion I visited Jerusalem in 1996 during the bus bombings. One of the favourite targets at that time was the number 18 bus in Jerusalem. In Hebrew the numbers in the letters are also numbers. In Hebrew the number 18 spells *chai*, which is the word for life. The terrorists liked to target the number 18 bus as their depiction of what life should be for Israelis under those conditions.

During that time I was able to contact a teacher I had met on numerous occasions. She was very upset because one of the students in her class had lost family members in that bus bombing. I tried to arrange a meeting but because she was so upset she was not sure her and her husband could make it. A day or so later she invited me to speak to her class which I did shortly after the bombing. I did not know what I could say as a Canadian that would bring peace to these people except to say that we needed to see a change of heart on both sides as it was a spiritual conflict.

A lot has been said tonight. I do not believe that most Muslims are terrorists and I hope our friends and neighbours understand this. After the events of September 11 many members of the Muslim community have expressed their outrage and dismay at what some people who profess their religion have done. I do not believe most Muslims are terrorists and I do not believe most Israelis want to kill Arabs. I think most people really do want peace.

● (0000)

I heard one of my colleagues tonight describe the Stations of the Cross in Jerusalem, stations I visited on the Via Dolorosa with my tour groups on numerous occasions as I went through the Arab souk or market. I have also visited the Arab souk in Hebron.

I will share a word with hon. members because sometimes there is good advice in ancient writings. This is from the ancient prophet Zachariah. It was written about 500 years before Christ. It says:

The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him. Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

That is a sobering scripture. There are no easy solutions to the conflict but we might caution all nations to handle the issue carefully and delicately. We might consider an ancient scripture in Genesis 12:3 which says:

And I will bless those that bless thee, and I will curse those that curse thee—

There is another scripture I like to remember. Psalm 122 says "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee."

S. O. 52

The battle will not be easily solved by natural means or politics. It is a spiritual battle. It is a conflict. We will need to see a change in heart. Only a change in heart will allow people to put aside hatred and again reach out to find a prospect of peace.

All hon. members would do well in our political considerations to heed the advice of the scriptures. I heard others mention tonight that we should pray for Mr. Sharon and Mr. Arafat. We should pray for all those caught in the conflict. We should pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

• (0005)

**Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton West—Mississauga, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it may be surprising but after nine years this is the first time I have participated in a debate. I was not sure if I had to stand.

I will begin by saying how proud I am of our Minister of Foreign Affairs for taking a firm position. He has expressed our disgust and contempt for the cowards who strap bombs to young men and women and send them to their deaths, taking innocent Israelis with them. I am also proud that he has stood firm in demanding Mr. Sharon withdraw from the illegally occupied territories and immediately implement a ceasefire.

Everyone has started by talking about history. I am a generic Canadian. I was not very old when a movie called *Judgment at Nuremberg* came out. What it did to my sensitivities as a human being is something I have gone forward with in the past.

When we hear about human rights abuses the first feeling we have is a terrible pity for the victims. Then comes anger for those who perpetrated the crimes. However when that is gone, in the end we feel shame. We feel shame that we are a species who can do these kinds of things to each other.

No one in the world, not one race or religion, has a monopoly on everything that is good or everything that is bad. When we are looking to blame one side more than the other we are mistaken. Israelis, Palestinians, Canadians, Christians, Jews and Muslims are all the same. None of us have a monopoly on goodness. None of us have a monopoly on evil.

My experience in Palestine began in the elections for the Palestinian Authority. We walked among Palestinians in Gaza for 15 days. There was no infrastructure. There were no street lights. There was no proper sewage. There was no fresh water. People lived in cement buildings that were almost like army barracks.

At 11 o'clock at night, by the light of the moon only, we walked alone among these people. They were very trusting people. They were devastated by the loss of Prime Minister Rabin. They had put a great deal of faith and hope in Mr. Rabin for a future in an independent Palestine. They were cynical about their choices in the election. However all in all there was a sense of optimism. Mr. Arafat was elected. In spite of the numbers I am not sure he was elected with a great deal of enthusiasm because he had been a violator of his own people's human rights.

We visited the mental health centres that were supported by Canada. The doctors there explained to us that if suspected Palestinian terrorists were arrested, taken to Israeli prisons and abused or tortured they still had a sense of pride when they came out.

They had a sense they had done it for a cause. However when Arafat arrested his own people on mere suspicion and executed them without trial there was no pride. Those arrested did not understand why their own people would do it to them.

• (0010)

When we left Palestine I sensed that people there believed we cared. They believed we would follow through after observing the elections to see that it was a continuous democratic process. They believed laws and systems of justice like we have in our country would be set up.

However we ignored the situation and let it continue. We let them down. I say we generically meaning we the western world, those of us who proclaim that we care so much. We did not follow through. We did not pressure Israel to cease building in the new settlement centres. We did not insist that settlers be moved out of the Palestinian territory, and the frustration grew.

The children involved in the first intifada skeptically accepted that there was something better in the future for them. Can members imagine what it would be like to live in a Palestinian refugee camp and have a new settlement centre down the street not less than walking distance away? Let us imagine our children playing in backed up sewers when it rained because the infrastructure was not there and the fresh water went to settlement centres.

This is not a criticism. It is perhaps an insight into the frustration Palestinians have felt. There has been no justice for them and no guarantee of education. Their trade and businesses all depend on accessibility and being able to get across the borders. However we have let it go. I do not think there is a person in the Chamber who does not absolutely insist on security for the Israelis. However we must look at the same thing for the Palestinians.

We are going to Palestine and the source of our trip has been criticized. Now more than ever it is necessary for us to go. Saddam Hussein has made a token offer that seems to strike at the west. It will not hurt the west but it will create another false hero and false hope for young Palestinians. They need to know people in the west and in Europe are there to offer support and guidance for a peaceful solution.

I am not sure Arafat or Sharon can deliver peace. We will need to have international observers. However as in every situation where governments are behaving badly, we must first separate governments from people. It is the people who are suffering for the ambitions of a few.

**Mr. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this conflict is 4,000 years old. It is really a battle between two aboriginal peoples over the same piece of real estate. If we want a fresh perspective on this conflict, my suggestion is that we read I or II Kings or Ezra or Chronicles in the Old Testament. The ebb and flow of ancient battles read something similar to the headlines of the *Globe and Mail*. These ancient foes have had claims over these lands which stretch back into antiquity and defy equitable or logical allocation. Each group points to various scriptures which justify their claim and drive them to actions and reactions which perpetuate this cycle of violence.

*S. O. 52*

This violence has never fully abated. About 2,000 years ago the Israeli tribes, the Benjamites and the Judites were exiled by the forces of the Roman Empire. The Diaspora spread throughout the civilized world where Jewish communities lived as smaller entities in larger societies. They then start to return after an absence of almost 2,000 years at the beginning of the 20th century, with migration at its peak immediate post World War II. Their neighbours and ancient foes were somewhat less than welcoming and fought pitched battles against the exiles.

Fierce determination, western acquiescence and a powerful patron in the form of the United States allowed this group of desperate peoples to re-establish a Jewish state over the objections of its residents. It has not been a peaceful or harmonious 50 years of Israeli statehood. The current round of conflict is merely a particularly virulent expression of this ancient cycle of violence.

No one outside the protagonists would particularly care about this latest expression of violence except that it is unique and that it has the ability to draw the rest of the world into its vicious orbit. I had the privilege of travelling there last year. One can readily see that an attractive life can be fashioned out of these ancient hills and why this land holy to many religions acts as a powerful magnet to many. However my first and overwhelming impression was that it was a very tiny nation, an insignificant nation of no real consequence to anyone.

Possibly I am used to the wide open spaces of Canada, but it struck me how this small, little country, not much bigger than a trip from Ottawa to Toronto, divided among six million people plus millions of displaced Palestinians, should be so sought after. It seemed strange. It is a tiny, insignificant spit of land which should be of no consequence to anybody. Yet through ancient forces barely comprehensible to the modern mind it has the capacity to draw the world into its orbit of conflict like no other place of conflict on the face of the earth. If a similar conflict were located anywhere else no one would really care, but this conflict is located in Israel and the conflict threatens to unleash much larger spheres of tension around the world.

The west is confronted by Islamism. Terrorism connects societies to each other which would ordinarily have a much more limited connection. We saw this past week where the Iraqi nation says it will no longer ship oil. Everyone keeps an eye on this conflict because they will be drawn into it against their own will.

What is Canada to do? To be candid, Canada will necessarily be a bit player. I am sure there are those, even those within our government, who say otherwise, but the brutal truth of the matter is that Canada has virtually limited influence over the protagonists.

●(0015)

We saw the bizarre spectacle of President Bush virtually ordering Prime Minister Sharon out of the occupied territories yesterday and getting virtually nothing for his troubles or, more accurate, partial pullouts from two small towns. It is clear that Mr. Arafat listens to no one, least of all Canada. One has to wonder whether it crosses Mr. Arafat's mind these days that the peace deal engineered between he and Ehud Barak a couple of years ago does not look particularly good right now. The Israelis have a cynical saying about Mr. Arafat.

He never misses an opportunity to miss an opportunity. The land for peace deal certainly must look a lot better than huddling in a bunker.

What can Canada do that is meaningful? If there were a peace process certainly Canada would support it, but the sad fact is that while suicide bombers do their deadly work and while Israeli forces attack Palestine cities and towns there is no peace, let alone a peace process. It is very difficult to see how Canada can make a meaningful contribution about a peace process other than to plead with the parties such as in debates like the one tonight.

When we were there last May we met Palestinians and Israelis alike. The irony was that the first three paragraphs of any briefing, be it a Palestinian or an Israeli briefing, sounded exactly the same. Then at some mysterious point the briefing went 180 degrees in the opposite direction. One wondered whether they were talking about the same conflict.

Two issues seem to preclude peace in the short and medium term. The first is the persistent indoctrination of Palestinian children that Jews are inherently evil. We were provided with documentation that showed Jews in a racist light. It was part of the school curriculum. It is pretty hard to see how peace will emerge from systemic hatred where children are taught to hate.

The second issue was Jewish settlements on disputed lands. There can be no more visible symbol of one's impotence than living in a refugee camp in a valley and looking up at one's ancestral home being bulldozed and replaced by a modern subdivision and occupied by people from California or wherever.

The settlers we talked to were not interested in peace. In fact they wanted a fight with the winner take all. I cannot image how that attitude will contribute to peace.

Canada stands for peace. It speaks forcefully in a variety of forums in favour of peace and stands ready to contribute to peace if asked. However Canada's voice seems to be lost in the cacophony of war. Peace is the only solution. No one will win this conflict. The protagonists will lose. The so-called winners will lose. The losers will lose. We will all lose. Mr. Sharon should pull back from the precipice. Mr. Arafat should get some control over his people before it is too late for us all.

●(0020)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, who seems quite happy to do so, as he has a lot of things to say about this conflict.

S. O. 52

I thank my colleague from Mercier for this opportunity to comment the terrible human tragedy unfolding in the Middle East, the occupied territories, Palestine. I would like to provide a brief historical overview. It is important to understand why the Palestinian people is so desperate, and how the actions of men, women and young girls who are blowing themselves up may be justifiable. These actions are called terrorism, but they may also be called desperate acts. This despair has historical roots. History shows how this people has been humiliated over the years. These things must be known .

I do not have much time and I know that I cannot give a detailed historical overview of the situation, but I would like to mention a few significant dates and events.

In 1920, there were 180,000 people living in Palestine, of which 58,000 were Jews. The issue for the Jews in those days was essentially one of numbers. This is why today there is such a move in favour of massive settlements. The Zionist organization is in charge of allocating land. By law Jewish settlers are prohibited from hiring non-Jewish farm workers.

Such a practice could be likened to apartheid. Cohabitation between Palestinians and Jewish immigrants was very difficult. Already in 1920 there was violence, and riots broke out. Resentment started building among Palestinian Arabs. Their efforts towards self-determination were consistently turned down. This was in 1920.

Today we realize that the Palestinians are facing the same difficult situation, which is even more difficult to solve. As a result of riots and escalating violence over the years, Great Britain decided in 1939 to carry out its own policy on its own. It changed a few things, including the immigration policy regarding Israelis. Immigration was capped at 18,000 a year.

This was the turn of the Jews to be unhappy. In 1939, the World War II broke out, and Great Britain pulled out its troops from Palestine. They were to be replaced by Jewish troops. The Jewish agency, an Israeli division of the Zionist organization, became a state within a state. It was the embryo of the future state of Israel.

At this time, a number of terrorist organizations were formed and they would be responsible for numerous attacks designed to weaken British control until it proclaimed Israel's independence. Official spokespersons from the Jewish community condemned these organizations, but no measures were taken to prevent them from operating.

Today the same criticisms can be heard. Israelis reproach Arafat today for the same thing. They demand that he denounce the acts of terrorism that are currently taking place.

Following this, Great Britain's position is untenable. Terrorist activity increases. British troops are expected to withdraw on August 1, 1948, and Palestine is to be divided into eight zones; 56% of the Palestinian territory is to go to the Jews, but they make up only 32% of the population.

History has demonstrated that there is an imbalance. Jews tried to destabilize the Palestinian population. The UN has not yet formed its armed forces at this time and must content itself with sitting by and watching.

● (0025)

The moment the British army leaves the territory, the Israeli army occupies it. Palestinians flee the Israeli army, civilians are killed. In 1949, Israel is admitted into the UN, but must comply with certain UN resolutions, including the refugees' right to return and the division of the territory according to the 1947 partition plan; Palestine is then said to have yet to be established.

Israel did not comply with the UN resolutions regarding its territory and the refugees' right to return, and has not to this day. In 1948, Israel adopted the Area of Jurisdiction and Power Ordinance, which decreed that all Israeli laws would also apply in Palestinian territories deemed occupied by the Defence army.

The reason that I have provided some historical context is to better explain how the Palestinian people have been trapped and oppressed over the years by a massive occupation, and by a lack of any ability to develop as a people.

The immigration policy continued until quite recently, even post-Oslo, when the Palestinians were supposed to be allowed certain powers and there was supposed to be a gradual implementation of independence for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Israel continued its settlement policy, and huge building projects were undertaken, in contravention of international law and UN resolutions.

I could give figures to demonstrate how the Jewish settlements began to take root just about everywhere in the West Bank, Jerusalem, Gaza. This settlement policy put one of the fundamental principles of the peace negotiations on shaky ground.

Today we might be able to understand how the Palestinians feel they have their backs to the wall, with no financial resources. What is happening now is that the international community will get involved. We have seen how prevalent the demonstrations have become. In invading the occupied territories now, in the way this is being done, human rights are being trampled upon.

As we have seen, people everywhere, people in Montreal, Quebec City, here in Ottawa, and elsewhere in Canada, cannot accept the destruction of infrastructures, the destruction of human lives, the trampling on human rights in this way.

The Palestinian people must be given some signs of hope. They cannot be left as they are, without resources. There are some hopeful signs, because there are also Jews who understand what the Palestinians are going through. I am thinking of the reservists who are serving in the Army. I am thinking of some Jewish intellectuals. I am also thinking of the Arab community, which has provided the Palestinian population with support. This daily provocation must stop. The Palestinians must regain their dignity. Their suffering must stop. Their rights and freedoms must no longer be flouted.

We must all work together in this. What we are asking is for Canada to send this occupation force to Palestine so that it may help both parties to resume negotiations in order to rebuild bridges.

In a few weeks, a mission will be going to Palestine, and I will be a member of it. We will then be able to see the situation. I know that the hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas has seen what was happening in Palestine. What is going on there is totally unacceptable.

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My reason for this historical overview is that we must understand how the people of Israel have developed at the expense of another people. This was not the initial intention of the agreement; there was no intention to trample on the rights of the Palestinians. I believe that all the resolutions on the table have not been fully respected. We will therefore have to start from square one if these peoples are to finally come to experience peace, and this applies to Jews and Palestinians alike.

• (0030)

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her speech. I wish her the best of luck in her not entirely parliamentary mission. There will be MPs, but I understand that it is an NGO mission with the Canadian Palestine House in Toronto.

This evening, I wish to say how sorry I am that we are forced to address this in the House. This is not the first time that we have talked about foreign policy. One cannot sit in a parliament such as this and not address such things. However, it is, I believe, the first time we have done so with a feeling of urgency and, goodness knows, indignation.

The party to which I belong has chosen not to engage in a policy of assigning blame. As a caucus, we have decided to recognize that the Palestinian state must be viable and have secure borders, and to say that the State of Israel has the same right.

However, some distinctions must be made about events. First of all, it should be clear from history that while we now recognize the right of the Palestinian and Israeli communities to have viable states, the fact remains that historically the Palestinians have suffered injustices.

I am grateful to the hon. member for Québec for reminding us of this. I simply wish to remind the House of two facts. The first is that, in the 19th century, when Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism, spoke about a national homeland for the Jews, he had two possible scenarios in mind. The first was for this homeland to be created in Argentina; the second was for it to be created in Palestine, sacred and historic land of the Israelis. Palestine was, at that time, an integral part of the Ottoman Empire. What must be said, and kept in mind, is that there was a policy of massive immigration. The hon. member for Québec pointed this out.

What I wish to point out is that between 1920 and 1929, there were 90,000 Israeli immigrants. Between 1930 and 1939, in the troubled context before World War II, there were 2,320,000. We must continue to bear in mind that, despite the decision of the international community to allow and to encourage the co-existence of these two states, the fact remains that historically the Palestinians have, to varying degrees, been driven out of their homeland.

I also wish to point out that the United Nations remain the best forum for multilateralism, the best forum for dialogue. Over the past two years, three UN resolutions have asked the Israelis to withdraw from the occupied territories, and not just the way it was done in 1967. In March of last year and twice this year, the Israelis were asked to leave Ramallah; they were asked to remove their tanks; they were asked to stop keeping Yasser Arafat in custody and in quarantine.

How would we react if we learned that this is happening, in any other context, to a head of state? The Palestinian authority is a state. The 1993 Oslo accords recognized the right of Palestinians to this authority. These accords delegated to the Palestinians a number of powers regarding customs, taxation, education and social affairs.

The Palestinian state does exist. It is based on democratic structures. Yasser Arafat is an authorized spokesperson for the Palestinians. How could we accept that, in any other state recognized by the United Nations, the head of that state, the legitimate spokesperson of that community would be kept in custody, in quarantine, and would be openly threatened physically?

• (0035)

We must recognize that we wish to maintain a dialogue. We are parliamentarians, and I reiterate that the Bloc Québécois has chosen to avoid assigning blame. It is not a question of attributing 80% of the blame to Israel, or 70% or 65%, or saying that the Palestinians are 5% at blame, or 10% or 15%. We must promote dialogue and put an end to the tensions generated in this region for more than 50 years now.

But there are prerequisite conditions, which include recognizing the fact the Israel has committed acts of aggression and that this aggression must come to an end. This means withdrawing from the occupied territories and the city of Ramallah and stopping attacks against targets that are of strategic importance to the viability of the Palestinian state.

We also recognize that suicide attacks do not help with the dialogue. However, it is important to note that the Israeli state, the Israeli army and the Israeli secret service have the means to destabilize the Palestinian state, and that this must be stopped.

The Bloc Québécois, through the member for Mercier, and through all of our critics who have spoken tonight, has outlined the five principles on which our position is based. I listened, from the gym, where I was training, to the speech by the member for Mount Royal, and I know that he is hoping for peace, as is the member for Burnaby—Douglas, just like all members of parliament.

Allow me to repeat these principles: the inalienable right of the State of Israel and Israelis to exist and to exist in peace, in a world where peace, tranquility and civility exist. We also believe in the same right for Palestinians, as well as the right to a viable state in equally peaceful conditions. We urge them to resume dialogue.

In the past, we have come very close to conditions that would allow a peace agreement to be signed. We spoke of the Oslo accords. We know how extremely important these accords were. We spoke of the Wye Plantation deal and we could also mention the Camp David II accords, which the member for Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier referred to earlier.

We do not believe that a military confrontation will allow a sustained dialogue and we call for an immediate end to the military approach.

Again, terrorism, whether on the part of the Palestinians or on the part of the Israelis, is unacceptable. We have said it many times and we stand by that statement.

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We are also asking all parliamentarians in the House to recognize Yasser Arafat as just as legitimate a head of state as the Prime Minister of this country, Lionel Jospin or Tony Blair. As long as the integrity of Yasser Arafat continues to be challenged, it will not be acceptable. As parliamentarians, we cannot forget that Yasser Arafat is being confined and that open threats have been made with regard to his safety. This is unacceptable.

I think that what happens in the future will depend heavily on Israeli leaders. The goodwill of civilian populations is what gives us hope.

Three years ago, mothers and grandmothers took to the streets in Israel. There is no doubt that they are willing to do it again. It is mostly the leaders, at least in the case of Israel, that have committed acts of aggression, but the civilian population is there to remind them that peace is crucial if this situation is to be resolved.

I am not speaking with the voice of despair, but with the voice of reality because I am convinced that the mission on which the member for Quebec and other parliamentarians will embark, combined with what the international community may do, can bring peace to a world that has been so unfairly deprived of it.

• (0040)

[English]

**Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Algoma—Manitoulin.

I just have a few things to add to the debate. I do not want to cover the points that were covered by other members, but I think a few words about the media war in the Middle East might be appropriate given that in my previous life I was a senior journalist with the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail* and other newspapers.

In my view, Israel has lost probably one of the most important battles of all and that is the battle for respect from the world. It is not the battle for media attention. It is not that all. It really boils down to the fact that Israel took a very serious step backward in its own interests in this current conflict by banning TV coverage of the war on the West Bank. This sends an unequivocal message to the international media that when a state does that it means that it does not want its military actions covered by the world press. It does not want its military actions to come under the scrutiny of the world.

The media know how to interpret that. The media always interpret that as the country having something to hide. In the case of the incursions into the West Bank, in my own view the Israeli government and Mr. Sharon desperately needed to have that world coverage, to have those TV cameras and reporters go with them into the West Bank if he is going to have any pretensions of justifying taking the war against terror into the Palestinian villages and towns neighbouring Israel.

He did not do that. There is no explanation, really, because what we see now is that the Israeli government gives us video footage from the Israeli defence force of bomb caches and it shows some shooting and fighting, but the world media will inevitably interpret that as propaganda. The difficulty there is that even if it is true, even if the Israeli government is giving us a true picture through its military video coverage of its own fighting on the West Bank, it will

not be believed. It shows a catastrophic naiveté on the part of the Israeli government with respect to how the world needs to perceive this kind of conflict.

This naiveté goes back a long time. One of the reasons that I wanted to speak is to draw the attention of those who are following this debate to the fact that Israel has had a long history of controlling the media and trying to control the story that comes out of Israel vis-à-vis its relationships with the Palestinians.

I was the features editor at the *Toronto Star* in 1979. I had just taken over the job. It was a brand new job for me. The *Toronto Star* is a very large, world class newspaper organization. It was world class then and it is world class now. Consequently we received a lot of wire copy from around the world and we prided ourselves on our international coverage. It was quite remarkable in those days because it turned out that one could not get a story out of Israel that was not previously vetted by the Israeli government. If the Israeli government, the authorities of the day, did not like the story, then the privileges were withdrawn from the journalist. This would be journalists from Germany, from the United States, from Canada, from wherever. The stories that we got that gave us a picture of what was happening in Israel at the time usually were a result of journalists deliberately going from Israel to Cyprus and filing their stories, or else they would write a story when they were done with their tour of duty in Israel and did not expect to go back.

• (0045)

The irony at that time was that the world press, certainly as I saw it from the *Toronto Star*, was very sympathetic to Israel's position, because it was not so many years after the six day war in which certainly the sympathy of the world was toward Israel, which seemed about to be overwhelmed by a much more powerful foe, but it is from that time in 1979 to this that the opinion in the international media has more and more gone against Israel as there has been a liberalization of media coverage and we have had more opportunity to see that there are genuine stresses from the Palestinian point of view in the state of Israel.

Now we are getting into a situation where the Israeli government is engaged in what is essentially a civil conflict with people it has lived side by side with for many, many years. As I understand from the television tonight, there is extreme fighting in Jenin but the media is not allowed to attend. The media is not allowed to see it.

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The difficulty is that after this is all over, after Israel has withdrawn its troops and has gone back to the normal frontiers of Israel, I am afraid that there will be terrible stories coming out of the West Bank, because I think another thing that perhaps the Israeli government has not appreciated is that times have changed since 1979. Even though we can go into the media headquarters of one of the Palestinian media outlets in Ramallah, as we saw in the *National Post* today, and destroy all the equipment, and we know why one wants to do that, one wants to limit the story that is coming out while one is engaged in conflict in Ramallah, but this is the age of the camcorder. I think it is extremely naive if the Israeli government, the government of Mr. Sharon, does not think that what is going on in the West Bank right now in Jenin or wherever else is not being recorded.

I am terribly afraid that after Israel withdraws from the West Bank Israelis will see a picture of conflict that will not sit well on world opinion and will reflect badly not only on the Israeli government but on its principal ally, the United States. It is something that I think the Israeli authorities should have thought of more carefully, because it is a cost of engaging in this particular conflict. I should add, just to make sure there is no misunderstanding, that normally during a war certainly the military, the authorities, do attempt to control some of the media distribution. That is primarily so information is not given to the enemy, but in this case there is no enemy there to take advantage of any information that might be released by media coverage because we are dealing with a civil conflict, not an organized enemy state.

Finally, I would like to touch very briefly on this, because I am also very, very concerned about what is happening to the prisoners being taken by the Israelis. There is almost no coverage of this. Where are they going? Are names being taken? Are they being subjected to torture? Are there appropriate NGOs and world organizations overseeing those prisoners or are they being held in some sort of situation like Guantanamo Bay in the United States where they are outside the law? Will we have a situation where, after this is over, after the incursions into the West Bank are completed, people will never come back? Is there any record of the people who have been taken? These are things that are terribly important, regardless of the justification of the Israeli response. I do respect it. It is a terrible horror, these suicide bombings, but if retaliation is not carefully measured in terms of the type of reaction and the opinion it will create from those on the sidelines who want to believe that the cause is justified and that the force is only enough force as required, the reputation of Israel, not just tomorrow but for decades, is at stake here.

●(0050)

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity both in my office and in the lobby to listen to a number of speeches this evening on this very important subject, including that of my colleague just in front of me. Without exception I have learned something from each of the speeches. Even while within our 10 minute or 20 minute speeches each of us has not been able to cover all the things we wanted to cover or to express all the solutions we think are appropriate, the sum total of what has been said and will be said this evening and into the night will express in a very full way the feelings of Canadians toward this very terrible situation in the Middle East.

I try to imagine the typical constituents in my riding, whether they are retired senior couples or high school students or young families, observing through the media and the news what is going on and trying to make some sense of it all. They hear the reasons from one side for certain activities and actions and they hear the reasons from the other side for that side's actions and responses. None of us, even if we were born there and live in Canada now or whether we visit there a lot or whether we are experts in political science, can really get our heads fully around the depth and despair of this situation. It is far from a simple situation. Whether complex solutions are required or whether it is one simple solution that is required, only time will tell.

The purpose of having a chance to debate this issue in the House is really not so much to disagree on one side or the other about who is right or wrong, because there are rights and wrongs on both sides of the issue. It is like looking at the situation in Northern Ireland. Although it is a very different history, there are still two sides fighting over age-old issues of which most of us have little understanding.

It is my feeling that we and the protagonists tend to spend too much time on the past, on what brought the players to the present situation. Not enough time and consideration are being given to the future, the future being young families, their children and their grandchildren who will inherit this relatively small but important area of the planet, an area that in fact carries within it the roots of three of the world's great religions, Christianity, Islam and Judaism. We are all related in many ways, but most important, we are related in that way. Our roots are really in the very same small part of the world.

It really is puzzling and mysterious why a place which one would assume would be a beacon of peace in the world, a paradise, a place of religious understanding and tolerance and give and take, is instead a place of seemingly endless fighting. If there is nothing else we can do at this time, then let us bring hope to the present and future generations. I have a strong belief that all the principal protagonists in place right now should leave, not just Mr. Arafat or Mr. Sharon. They both should leave as they are key players and new teams should take over, new teams of leaders who will maybe listen to the people more closely.

I am sure that if we could get a real sense of what the people wanted, it would be peace. While both sides claim a willingness to compromise and come to some kind of a solution, it seems that every time they are brought to the table some reasons on one side or the other are brought to bear and cause such agreements to collapse.

●(0055)

I do not have any magic answers. I just wanted to try to express that for many Canadians, while this is far away and in an area of the world they may not have or may never visit, that this issue is very important. It deals with not only the economic stability of the world when it comes to capitalistic things such as oil, a necessary thing, but a situation like that can too often as we have seen in the past lead to a worse conflict and a spreading of that conflict. That is the last thing any of us want to see happen.

There would be a collective sigh of relief if they all decided to come to terms with the problems. It may be naive for me and others in the House to suggest that because nothing we say will have an impact on the key players in Israel and Palestine. Canada has a history as a peaceful nation and a country willing to help keep the peace. I know our Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister have indicated Canada's willingness to do whatever is reasonable and possible in the circumstances to help bring about peace and hope for the children of Israel and Palestine.

It is tragic, sad and totally unnecessary that young Palestinians have become suicide bombers. It is unacceptable, just as unacceptable in some ways is the disproportionate response of the IDF. I am not nor will I lay blame on one side or the other. I lay blame on all sides. Both sides and the neighbouring countries have the greatest stake in and say about what should happen. I appreciate, and we all should appreciate, the efforts of the United States to bring the parties together but I really cannot imagine a solution being brought in from the outside. We have seen this tried in other places in the world in the past but ultimately it has to be resolved locally. However I agree that monitors and peacekeepers from around the world could help the local players in this tragic situation to come to a solution.

I was impressed with the efforts of some of my parliamentary colleagues who attempted to bring Israeli and Palestinian parliamentarians together at a meeting in Halifax. I thought that was a wonderful initiative. I was pleased it was brought forward by an opposition member. It was warmly received by our foreign affairs minister. Things like that, while they may seem small in the grand scheme of things, can have an impact.

The protagonists need to see that it is possible to run a country where a parliament is made up of people who were born in the Middle East, maybe of Arab descent or of Jewish descent, a parliament made up of people from all kinds of backgrounds who can debate and deal with issues in a parliament that allows for the consideration of other points of view. We really need to see democracy working in a real way, on both sides of the fence, in Israel and Palestine.

As I said earlier, both sides have their guilty ones but both sides have many innocents who deserve much better leadership than they are getting now. Messrs. Sharon and Arafat have been protagonists for a long time. I know it is naive on my part, but that is why I suggested that if they put ego aside, agreed to step down simultaneously with their key supporters and let a new leadership take over, it would be a grand step in the right direction.

I did not make this speech to offer any great solutions, but I do want to add my support to this government's efforts to beseech the Israeli army to be pulled out as soon as is practical from the occupied areas and that Mr. Arafat speak clearly to his people in their language that terrorism through suicide bombings must stop. We must not let the terrorists dictate the agenda there or anywhere else in the world.

• (0100)

[Translation]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, to start with, I would like to thank my colleague from Mercier for requesting this emergency debate, and the Chair for

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allowing it to happen. Today we are witnessing a spectacular escalation of the bloody conflict which has been dragging on for months in the Middle East and which is threatening to set the whole area ablaze.

We are directly involved, especially as this conflict seems to be spreading here in the repugnant form of unfortunate acts of hatred and intolerance. It was incumbent on us as parliamentarians to debate this sensitive issue in order to identify the kind of action we would like Canada to undertake in support of the international community's efforts to bring the parties back to the negotiating table and resume the peace process without delay.

In 1818, when Franz Gruber composed the popular Christmas carol *Silent Night, Holy Night*, a solemn and gentle hymn, little did he know that the little peaceful village of Bethlehem he was referring to would one day become the scene of a bloody conflict pitting brother against brother: the descendants, according to the traditions of the Bible and the Koran, of Isaac and Ishmael, both sons of the same patriarch Abraham. However, according to the prophet Micah, in Bethlehem was to be born a son to the illustrious house of King David, who, with his message of love, was going to finally change the course of the history of mankind.

The Holy Land, the birthplace of the three great monotheistic religions in the world, was torn by violence under the combined influence of mistrust, century old hatred and escalating provocation set on a background of seemingly incompatible territorial claims. This tiny territory one can cross from north to south as rapidly as one can go from Quebec City to Ottawa, is the subject of competing claims on the part of the Israelis and the Palestinians, who both base their claims on historical and traditional grounds.

Indeed, it is true that Palestine's history is inextricably tied to that of Judaism, but also to that of Islam. After leaving Egypt and settling in the land of Canaan, more than 3,000 years ago, the Hebrews conquered Palestine and occupied it until they were dispersed by the Romans, around the year 135, as a reprisal following the second revolt against Rome. Around the year 630, Palestine fell under Muslim domination. Except for a few short periods during which it changed hands as a result of rare victories by the crusaders, Palestine remained firmly Muslim until 1919, when the British mandate was created.

With the growing number of Jewish immigrants, the political will to create a Jewish state in Palestine began to take form and the tensions between the two communities began to surface, before culminating in 1948 with the proclamation of the state of Israel.

The creation of the state of Israel was made possible through the combined effect of an international community that was embarrassed by the inertia and the passive complacency that it had shown when the Nazi regime was committing innumerable crimes against Europe's Jewish communities—the international community was clearly trying to redeem itself—and the weariness of the British authorities responsible for implementing the mandate in Palestine, because they were constantly harassed by Zionist terrorist organizations.

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The proclamation of the state of Israel was a painful process, since the Palestinian territory was dismembered. Incidentally, this was a solution proposed by Canada, but that the Arab populations who had been living there for centuries categorically refused to accept. As soon as it was created, the state of Israel had to fight for its survival by facing the combined and simultaneous attack of all the neighbouring Arab states.

Since then, Israel has invoked the need to ensure its security to keep extending and increasing its control over all the territories of the former Palestine, this in violation of the will of the international community. Such will was in fact expressed repeatedly in a series of resolutions adopted by the United Nations and asking for the withdrawal of Israel from what is now known as the occupied territories.

This is what created the fertile ground that would lead this region to the deadly spiral of violence that we are currently witnessing. Given the power of the state of Israel and the blatant injustices resulting from the occupation, young disillusioned and fanatic Palestinian activists reach the point where they feel that they have no other option but to commit terrorist acts involving the sacrifice of their own lives, in an attempt to change the situation. This in turn triggers a swift and brutal response on the part of Israel.

● (0105)

Today's international context, with its focus on fighting terrorism, obviously serves as a justification of Israel's harder line.

I want to make something perfectly clear. I have already had the pleasure and privilege of visiting Israel and Palestine on two occasions. Israel is an absolutely fascinating country. Despite its tiny size, its climate and scenery are amazingly diversified and full of contrast, as indeed are its people.

While there I had an opportunity to observe the most noble and also the most base parts of human nature. I had the opportunity to visit the Deganya kibbutz, which is on Lake Galilee. In addition to being the birthplace and childhood home of the redoubtable General Moshe Dayan, it is important to point out that this was the very first kibbutz in Israel.

When we visited the modest kibbutz museum, I was struck by how very young the Russian emigres were who left everything behind in the very early years of the last century to come and found this tiny agricultural co-operative community, which was to serve as a model of development for the country and which shaped the soul of an entire people.

I was in awe to think back to how very little I had accomplished in my carefree and frivolous days at the polyvalente De Montagne, at the same young age at which these young people, probably quite unwittingly, were laying the foundations of the State of Israel.

I was equally in awe during my visit to another of the kibbutzim at the point where the road from Tel Aviv to Gaza along the Mediterranean crosses the road to Beersheba, when I was told that its members had successfully held off the Egyptian army for close to six days before the Israeli army finally managed to drive back the invaders.

What a fine, eloquent example of determination, courage and devotion to country by these farm folk who turned themselves into soldiers to defend their cause.

I am in awe as well at the endurance and determination of this people who, despite the vicissitudes of history and the persecution they have undergone for centuries, have always been able to join forces, remaining faithful to the God of their forefathers, and even reviving the language of those forefathers, which had almost completely disappeared by 1948.

However, I also observed the proliferation of Jewish settlements that literally encircled Palestinian communities and choked them by preventing any expansion and development. For Palestinians, they constitute the hated and blatant symbol of Israeli occupation and the robbing of their lands.

I also observed the hurried construction of Israeli freeways, which disfigure the countryside in the occupied territories and which cut across them in a brutal manner, the only purpose being to allow Jewish settlers to travel between Israel and their settlements without having to go through Palestinian communities.

I saw the border checkpoints Palestinians have to go through in order to travel from one zone to another in their own country, provided, of course, that they have the right permit. This is why most Palestinians cannot visit Islam's third holy site, Haram as-Sharif, the Noble Sanctuary, in Jerusalem, while tourists from around the world can visit it freely.

I also saw Israel, a constitutional state, a modern democracy, discriminate against its own citizens. While military service is mandatory for Israeli Jews, Israeli Arabs, with a few exceptions, are officially prohibited.

I was also disheartened to see that a people who have faced so many challenges in building their own state could turn such a blind eye to the most basic aspirations and misfortunes of the Palestinians. If there is one people that should understand better than others the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinians, it should be the Israelis.

It is important to point out that we would not want to attribute the decisions and actions of a government to all of its citizens. There are people on both sides who hope for peace more than anything else. The hope that the parties will one day reach a lasting peace rests on these people of goodwill.

● (0110)

In the meantime, the situation continues to deteriorate. It is only normal that the State of Israel should wish to ensure its continued existence and its security. However the disproportionate means used, initially a source of consternation, have now become quite simply indecent and intolerable.

Any loss of human life is regrettable, but it must be admitted that the toll is considerably higher on the Palestinian side. The Torah says that he who saves a life saves humanity. Do those who take the lives of so many innocent civilians on both sides commit crimes against humanity? Well might one wonder.

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The belligerents are now engaged in a spiral of violence from which they seem unable to extricate themselves and which seems to have as its source the rhetoric used and the strategy put forward by Israel in response to the terrorist attacks.

Rather than going after the terrorist organizations, which are obviously working to undermine the peace efforts and which are beyond the control of the Palestinian Authority, Israel has systematically attacked the latter, expressly calling on it to rein in the terrorists while, at the same time, destroying all its infrastructure and thus limiting its capacity for real action. The effect of this has been to provide the Jewish state with a convenient excuse for further tightening the noose around the occupied territories.

In so doing, Israel has exacerbated the reaction of terrorist organizations, which have renewed the macabre round of attacks with a vengeance, thus setting themselves up for increasingly brutal military reprisals. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth", said Moses. This seems to have become "eyes for an eye, and teeth for a tooth".

Israel's customary promptness in protesting vigorously any Palestinian terrorist attack contrasts sharply with the apparent indifference and apathy shown by the Israeli authorities following a bomb attack by an extremist Jewish group in the yard of an Arab school in East Jerusalem. What was the Jewish state's response in this case? "Anti-terrorist terrorism", coldly concluded the Israeli authorities. Israel has imperturbably pursued its punitive operations in the occupied territories.

But the worst thing of all in this whole business is that Israel's policy has the effect of violating, one after another, all the provisions of the peace accords patiently negotiated between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, which had held out the possibility of lasting peace in the region.

The events in recent weeks can lead us to only one conclusion: violence breeds violence. There can therefore be no question of either side trying to resolve this conflict through any sort of violence.

All solutions must begin with political negotiation. Although only the belligerents can achieve the final resolution of the conflict, we must do everything in our power to bring them back to the negotiating table.

We are therefore duty bound to speak out against any behaviour by either party that is contrary to the spirit or the letter of the peace accords and to support the idea of deploying international observers, and possibly an interposition force, to the region.

We must resolutely uphold the provisions of resolutions 1402 and 1397, recently passed by the Security Council of the United Nations. The parties must reach a ceasefire agreement promptly. Israel must withdraw its troops without delay from the occupied territories. President Arafat, who in our opinion cannot be excluded from any process to get the peace process back on track, must reiterate absolutely unequivocally that he condemns any act of terrorism targeting innocent civilians. Perhaps thought needs to be given to creating a buffer zone for a certain set length of time in order to ensure the safety and security of the populations of Israel and of Palestine.

Once these preliminary steps have been taken, it will be the appropriate time to ensure that the parties resume the negotiations that will finally lead to lasting peace in the region.

●(0115)

This being said, we believe that there cannot be any lasting peace without an end to military occupation and to settlement of the occupied territories. There cannot be any lasting peace without a satisfactory agreement on the status of Jerusalem and on the issue of refugees. There cannot be any lasting peace without the creation of a politically and economically viable Palestinian state. There cannot be any lasting peace without the formal recognition of the right of Israel to exist within secure and established frontiers.

That is why we applaud the peace plan established by Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, which was endorsed during the last meeting of the League of Arab States held in Beirut last March 28. For the first time, all the Arab states agreed to officially recognize the State of Israel and to establish formal relations with it, provided that the new state accepts to hand over the territories occupied since 1967 to a future Palestinian state, except of course the Golan Heights, which would be returned to Syria.

It will be very important that the international community, particularly Canada, substantially increase the level of the assistance given to the Palestinian Authority. Everything has to be rebuilt, the highway infrastructure, utilities, social services, and so on.

The international community will have to stand in solidarity with the populations affected by this conflict because, as we said with great insistence in the wake of the events of September 11 when we joined the ranks of nations determined to fight terrorism, we must not only target its effects, but also its root causes, that is poverty, injustice and exclusion.

Also, in the wake of the events of September 11, we have witnessed the emergence of hate motivated behaviours directed toward the Arab community. The government acted promptly to counter this wave of intolerance that seemed to associate Islam and Arab communities with terrorism, a simple but inappropriate association that had to be denounced.

Similarly, some people seem to want to transpose in our communities the conflict that exists in the Middle East. We were dumbfounded as we witnessed hate motivated acts against the Jewish community and we must denounce these acts with the same energy.

Therefore, we must expect this government to take measures to prevent, as much as possible, similar acts from being committed in our communities.

In these circumstances, I will conclude by saying that only an unconditional return to the negotiating table could prevent this situation from deteriorating even further and from making even more victims. The parties must break free of the vicious circle of violence in which they are becoming more and more entangled every day. They must truly believe that a solution is possible. For the rest, all we can do is pray Allah and Yahweh and hope for the best.

*S. O. 52*

● (0120)

[*English*]

**Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for St. Paul's.

It is with a heavy heart that I rise in the House today to join in the debate on the escalating conflict between the Palestinian and Israeli people in the Middle East. This conflict has spanned some six decades and taken or destroyed the lives of many thousands of mostly innocent people from both communities, people who are simply trying to live normal lives in very abnormal circumstances.

There are some commonly accepted reasons that explain how the ongoing cycle of violence began and why it continues today. From the perspective of the Israelis, for whom the spectre of the Holocaust and hostile Arab armies bent on their destruction lies within living memory, this conflict represents a struggle to survive.

Despite their military power they still feel isolated, vulnerable and surrounded by a sea of enemies. Terrorist attacks on Israel harden the hearts of those who want peace now and strengthen the resolve and cause of those who do not.

For Palestinian people who have been disenfranchised by the events of history and international political forces beyond their control, this is a struggle to regain their homeland, their pride and dignity as an independent nation.

The creation of Israeli settlements and incursions of the Israeli military into their communities on the West Bank and Gaza Strip engenders feelings of resentment and hopelessness for a peaceful resolution in those who pray for peace and adds fodder to the fires of anger of those who do not.

This undertaking gives no solace to those who have been caught up in the fear and horror of living through a lifetime of war. The inability of the people who share the region of Palestine to come to a peaceful resolution to their conflict, despite the assistance and intervention of the world's great powers, represents one of the great tragedies of modern history and one of the most significant failures in the realm of diplomacy. It reflects a stubborn unwillingness born from suffering on both sides to let go of past injustices, real or perceived, and to live and let live. In a real sense it is a failure of all humanity.

Both communities contain opposing factions with conflicting political agendas. Each contains people who believe that encouraging or facilitating the ongoing conflict is advantageous to fulfilling their agendas. They do not want resolution and peace but rather support an armed confrontation whose final outcome is the total eradication of the other. While I believe that they represent the small percentage of the people in the area, their radical actions have had a destabilizing impact that is out of proportion to their numbers.

There are many more people in these communities who yearn for peace. Their voices are being heard less and less these days. Events such as terrorist attacks like suicide bombings by Palestinians and political assassinations by the Israeli military have the effect of both creating and perpetuating anger, fear and hatred in many people who would otherwise genuinely seek peace.

It is with a sense of irony that I take part in this debate tonight. My life has in a strange twist of fate crossed paths with the conflict in the Middle East once before.

The Hungarian revolution exploded on October 23, 1956. The heroes of the Hungarian revolution, with its freedom fighters, teenagers and pre-teenagers, had many martyrs who used molotov cocktails or whatever they could find to fight Soviet armour.

The Israeli attack backed by France and England on October 29, 1956 against Egypt to gain control over the Suez Canal diverted world attention from the tragic Hungarian struggle and allowed the Soviet destruction of the Hungarian revolution. The Suez crisis brought the world to the brink of a world war.

This tragic time spawned one of Canada's finest hours. Under the leadership of Lester B. Pearson, then Canadian secretary of state for external affairs, Canada helped to put together an international peacekeeping force under the United Nations flag to defuse the Suez crisis. Ironically, Hungary is free and at peace while the Middle East conflict once again threatens world peace.

It is ironic that I who was a ten year old Hungarian boy at the time of the Hungarian revolution and the Suez crisis in 1956, one who became one of 200,000 refugees, one who lived in a Jewish refugee camp in Austria, now as a Canadian member of parliament partake in this debate on a Middle East crisis that once again threatens the peace of the world.

I fully support the idea that there should be an immediate resolution to the Middle East conflict and note that Canada has publicly called for the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian controlled areas viewing these actions as helpful to the peace process. We have also called for the cessation of suicide bombings and other terrorist attacks by Palestinian militants.

● (0125)

Further, I support the fundamental tenet of the Canadian Middle East policy which is to encourage both parties to work toward peace through a negotiated settlement. We have called upon both sides to immediately move to a meaningful ceasefire and to work toward implementing the Tenet plan and the Mitchell recommendations with the aim of resuming negotiations for a political settlement as set out in United Nations Security Council resolution 1402.

Our efforts in this realm are well meant and need to become a reality. However, considering the escalation of hostilities in the region over the past 18 months, the status quo is definitely no longer an acceptable option.

The time has come for Canada to step forward and actively promote the creation of a peacekeeping force for the region. This is an absolute necessity to ensure the security of both communities until such time as they develop a history of peaceful co-existence. The protection of this force will allow for the resumption of normal life in Israel and the establishment of a civic and national leadership and administration whose objectives are the promotion of economic and social well-being in the Palestinian controlled areas.

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Canada has had a long and proud history as peacekeepers. Our reputation in this realm can go a long way in convincing both parties involved that it is in their best interests to co-operate with this effort. They must be convinced that the cycle of conflict can be broken through their collective efforts.

Along with the military protection of a UN peacekeeping force, the Palestinian people will need our assurances of financial support for economic development and rebuilding their infrastructure, and the political support of the west for the creation of good governance and democratization.

Accommodating the security needs of Israel involves the elimination of terrorism. In my speech to the House on October 2 I said that to eliminate terrorism, we must ultimately address the need to change the conditions that breed terrorists. Nowhere can the truth of that statement be seen more clearly than in the Middle East.

The Israelis need to accept that their safety and well-being lie in the elimination of the root causes of terrorism, causes that they have inadvertently contributed to over the years. We must try to convince them that the creation and support of sustainable political and social conditions and institutions in Palestine that provide for human development will ultimately provide their best possible security.

There is one significant factor that must be addressed if we hope to see a secure and permanent peace in the region, and this is a change in the foreign policy of the countries in the region that call for the destruction of Israel. I support elements of the Saudi Arabian peace plan that called for the establishment of a Palestinian state secure within its own borders. In return, Israel would be guaranteed normalization of relations with its neighbouring Arab states, their recognition of the legitimacy of the existence of the state of Israel and their guarantee that Israel will be safe from terrorist attacks.

The conflict in that region is decades old and will take patience and fairness to resolve. No matter how strong our reassurances, or how many guarantees we offer, or how many mechanisms we put in place to provide a sense of security for the people living there, ultimately what they will need to make the leap of faith to peacefully co-exist in Palestine is an extended period of time living without day to day threats to their families.

We must pray for the strength of character and courage in the leaders of both sides in the conflict that will allow them to put aside their fear and hatreds and take the first steps toward a permanent peace, for the sake of their children and their children's children.

• (0130)

**Ms. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, tonight's debate is about the Middle East. For many of the people in my riding, this is not a debate about Canadian foreign policy; this is about family. Like the member for Mount Royal, many of the citizens of St. Paul's every day watch the news, listen for a phone call with the thoughts of their family members who live there, study there, work there.

As a little girl growing up in Toronto, I knew only one Hebrew word, shalom. It means peace. We sang about peace in the song *Shalom Haverim*. We knew it was about peace and about friends hopefully coming back. I do not think that at any time we could have even remotely contemplated what the absence of peace could feel

like, what the worry about friends that might not come home would mean.

When I first started knocking on the doors of St. Paul's in 1997 I remember being surprised at how often I was asked if I had ever been to Israel. I did not really understand why that would be so important to so many. I do know now. It is about the families, their histories and today, on Holocaust remembrance day, it is about making sure that the atrocities chronicled in Yad Vashem must never happen again.

I believe it is about eliminating hatred and moving from the tolerance that we usually enjoy here in Canada to try to reach real respect and dignity worldwide.

As September 11 taught us so clearly, this is a very small planet and the costs of hatred and its byproduct terrorism are intolerable.

As Thomas Friedman quoted in his March 10 article in the *New York Times*, the Middle East analyst Stephen Cohen said:

The question is whether Palestinian extremists will do what bin Laden could not: civilizational war. If you are willing to give up your own life and that of thousands of your own people, the overwhelming of America and Israel does not deter you any more. We are now on the cusp of the extremists' realizing this destructive power, before the majority is mobilized for an alternative. That's why this Israeli-Palestinian war is not just a local ethnic conflict that we can ignore. It resonates with too many millions of people, connected by too many TV's, with too many dangerous weapons.

As the member for St. Paul's, I have travelled to Israel and the Palestinian territories three times; in 1999 with my eldest son, Jack; in 2000 with the Prime Minister and my friend and brilliant colleague, the member for Mount Royal and with many other parliamentarians with strong relationships to the Middle East; and last year I went with my youngest son, Ben.

It was indeed travelling with my sons that was the most poignant. As I looked at the soldiers, some younger than my own boys, I could only think what their mothers must feel and how they must hope and want to work toward peace.

As we sat in the town hall in Metullah last year I felt an insecurity that was palpable, that as the clock showed 8 p.m. the counsellors kept glancing at their watches. It was at that time that they had come to expect the Katushka rockets over the border from Lebanon. As we sat in a cafe in Ben Yehuda, everyone of us was aware of the previous bombings there. Would tonight be safe? We were no longer able to take our Canadian homeland security for granted.

We went to meet with Saeb Ereket in Jericho by bulletproof van. We heard his personal narrative. With his Ph.D. in peace and conflict studies he was worried for his son, worried that his father's preoccupation with the peace process would make his son a target, worried that his son might decide to act out by going and throwing stones and getting into harm's way.

This is no way to live. Too many have lost their lives.

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Out of these darkest times we must look forward to a way out. I believe that the way out is a way that we already have through an agreement. The political process must resume as a matter of extreme emergency. We must look forward to the commitments that have been made to the longstanding Canadian policy in the Middle East, Israel and Palestine living side by side within secure and recognized borders.

We must work to implement the Tenet security work plan as a first step toward the implementation of the Mitchell committee recommendations with the aim of resuming negotiations on this political settlement.

Last Sunday night in St. Paul's I met with some of my constituents who are very concerned. I think at some level they are feeling abandoned by their Canadian government. We talked and it was a very constructive conversation. They feel that as Canadians we should not be taking a them and us, teeter-totter path. They feel that we should continue to make decisions based on our Canadian values.

●(0135)

Professor Dewitt of York University thought we must begin with an absolute campaign against incitement, that we must find ways to audit it and that we must act to eliminate it. We must continue to earn the gavel that the UN working group gave us on Palestinian refugees. It is extraordinarily important that Canada keep that gavel and keep the moral authority to be able to be fair in the region. It is extraordinarily important that we continue to build democracy and that we use all the skills of public servants and all people we could mobilize to help in the region.

On the incitement file I have to say following my trips to the Middle East I feel there is a disparity between what we witnessed in Israel and what we saw in the fantastic museum demonstration which showed the effects of hatred in Northern Ireland and in Bosnia. They brought school groups to see the quotations of peacemakers and peacebuilders from around the world.

I am concerned that we do not have evidence of that happening on the Palestinian side. I am concerned that there are still maps without Israel, that hatred is being portrayed against Israelis. The kinds of pamphlets that were turned in by our Canadian delegates from the Durban conference would bear that out.

I do not believe that suicide bombers just happen. They are created and encouraged. As Thomas Friedman said in his April 7 article, a normal state cannot be built on the backs of suicide bombers. We as Canadians should insist that everyone must declare the right of both states to exist.

We must take our audit and gather evidence of incitement. We must work hard in our truly Canadian tradition based on Lester Pearson and George Ignatieff to strengthen the rule of law that can only happen in an institution such as the United Nations. It is not perfect. We have a responsibility to make it even better.

We must support the efforts of people such as Arnold Noyak who are working in Jordan and in the Palestinian territories with Jewish doctors, showing that they can actually work on the ground.

This is a difficult time for Canadians. We have many friends affected by this horrible situation in the Middle East. We understand

it is not clear. This weekend we had the Jews for Peace vigil, the Israel solidarity rally and many e-mails saying that we should stop pandering to the Jews.

It is imperative as parliamentarians that we stay the course in sticking to our Canadian values and make our decisions in that way. On a personal note, the Minister of Foreign Affairs has done an admirable job in keeping that fine line and the corrections that are necessary to keep this complex situation on the rails to peace. We must work toward the peace process. We must make sure there is a political solution that will end terrorism.

It is extraordinarily important as we move forward that we look back at one of the most brilliant people we have known, Albert Einstein, as a constituent from the Ontario Cancer Institute reminded me, who said that peace could not be achieved through violence, that it could only be attained through understanding.

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance):**

Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House to debate the tragic situation in the Middle East, mindful that yesterday was the day of mourning and remembrance for the victims of the Shoah, the terrible Holocaust of the last century where six million Jews were systematically exterminated in what became the most unfathomable act of evil in the many sad centuries of human history.

In contemplating that terrible evil we have learned to respond with the simple rallying cry of Eli Wiessel "never again". Never again will those who believe in human dignity allow an entire race to be targeted for extermination. Never again will the free world stand by as an ideology of hate takes root and grows strong enough to destroy an entire people. In particular, never again will free nations allow the cancer of anti-Semitism to metastasize into a mortal threat to the Jewish people.

I fear that as the horror of the Holocaust begins to fade in our collective memory after five decades the promise "never again" becomes a hollow one, an empty cliché for too many of us in the liberal west.

That is why the Jewish democratic state of Israel is a pearl of such great price. It is the concrete manifestation of the promise "never again". The free world can best discharge that promise and honour its very serious moral debt to the Jewish people by guaranteeing the security of Israel as a beacon of hope and self-determination and democracy for the Jewish people.

When addressing complex issues such as the conflict in the Holy Land I try to start by identifying principles. For me this is the first operative principle: if given a chance Israel's enemies would not think twice about destroying it and launching the world on a second Jewish Holocaust.

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Some 4.8 million Jews, fewer than were murdered in the European Holocaust, live in a democratic state on a tiny parcel of land smaller than any of our Great Lakes and only nine miles across at its narrowest point. Israel is surrounded by 23 Arab or Islamic states, almost all of which are dictatorships with combined populations of more than 300 million and standing armies that outnumber Israel's by more than fifteen to one.

These Arab states have repeatedly tried to destroy Israel: first at its inception in 1948 by attempting to override the international mandate for separate Jewish and Palestinian states and then again in 1956, 1967 and 1973. Many of these belligerent states remain formally committed to the annihilation of Israel and its Jewish inhabitants and as a matter of policy deny the very right of Israel to exist.

As they have done for three decades many of Israel's enemies are again using the Palestinian people and their struggle for self-determination as a surrogate battleground against the so-called Zionist aggressor.

Syria continues to sponsor Hezbollah's attacks against northern Israel through Lebanon. Iraq has upped the ante for its blood money payments to Yasser Arafat's martyrs at a rate of \$25,000 per family.

On top of financing the murderous terrorism of Hamas, Iran was caught red-handed sending a shipment of a 50 tonne armory of weapons, explosives and rockets to the Palestinian authority's so-called security police aboard the *Karine A* earlier this year, a shipment which was clearly authorized and approved by Yasser Arafat but of which he has so ridiculously and disingenuously denied knowledge.

All this has contributed to the vicious wave of suicide bombings that over the past 18 months have taken the lives of hundreds of innocent Israeli citizens, proportionately far more than the 3,000 innocent civilians killed in the United States by Islamic terrorists on September 11. Innocent Israelis in prayer, in leisure, in the midst of ordinary life were mauled and murdered by bombers raised in the cult of the shahid or martyrdom.

However what frightens me most is that the enemies of Israel are willing the moment they obtain the means to prosecute a second Holocaust using weapons of mass destruction.

• (0140)

Just last month former Iranian President Rafsanjani explicitly threatened Israel with the use of nuclear weapons should Iran obtain them. Of course Iraq continued to develop its biological weapons program and has the power to deploy such weapons to Israel using mid-range Scud missiles. For a country the size of Israel a major first strike with weapons of mass destruction would in fact be a last strike.

All this flows from a virulent and growing strain of anti-Semitism in the Middle East and increasingly in western democracies. If one listens to the voices of many Islamist and Arab nationalist political, religious and media institutions in the Middle East, one hears a hatred for Jews in general and Israel in particular far more clearly than one hears a genuine sense of solidarity for the plight of Palestinian refugees.

Let me quote Ahmad Abu Halablya, an Arafat appointed and funded mufti, broadcasting live earlier this year on Palestinian authority official television. He stated:

The Jews must be butchered and killed, as Allah the Almighty said: "fight them": Allah will torture them at your hands...Have no mercy on the Jews, no matter where they are, in any country. Fight them, wherever you are. Whenever you meet them, kill them.

That was broadcast on Yasser Arafat's Palestinian authority television, a broadcast from a mufti appointed and financed by the Palestinian authority.

A serious review of official Palestinian media broadcasts over the past year will demonstrate that this kind of incitement is increasingly the norm, as will a review of Palestinian school textbooks as has been mentioned in debate earlier tonight. In the words of the *Washington Post* Pulitzer prize winning columnist Charles Krauthammer:

During the past eight years...Arafat had complete control of all the organs of Palestinian media and propaganda. It takes an unspeakable hatred for people to send their children to commit Columbine-like murder-suicide. Arafat taught it. His television, his newspapers, his clerics have inculcated an anti-Semitism unmatched since Nazi Germany.

That is moral background of the situation which we face in the Middle East. I heard people in the debate tonight and over the preceding weeks talking about the need for even-handedness and balance, the need for both sides to give a little in order to gain peace. I certainly appreciate that sentiment. It is a sensible one and it is a typically Canadian one, but I am not sure whether those who somewhat blithely advocate that approach really understand the intricacies and the recent history of developments in the Middle East.

We could probably all agree in Canada, with very little dissent, on the basic principle of solving the crisis in Israel through land for peace and the implementation of certain of the recent United Nations resolutions.

Israel has given land and has not received peace in return. Israel has extended its hand and in return has been the recipient of violence, murder and mayhem directed at innocent civilians. Israel removed itself from 95% of Judea and Samaria, the so-called occupied territories. Israel offered virtually everything ever asked by the Palestinian leadership at the Camp David and Taba negotiations, including joint sovereignty over the city of Jerusalem and a limited return of original refugees.

Everything has been put on the table and Israel has already vacated 95% of the territories. It has already given that land, but it expected and demanded in return a guarantee of peace. It expected that by recognizing a sovereign political authority in the Palestinian authority as led by Yasser Arafat that political authority would be able to enforce the rule of law and would be able to eliminate the cancer of terrorism directed at innocent civilians.

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●(0145)

However, the Palestinian authority under Mr. Arafat's leadership has failed abysmally to deliver on that commitment. To the contrary, over the past 18 months and, some would argue, ever since the Oslo process began eight and a half years ago, Chairman Arafat has incited violence and increasingly, the evidence is quite clear, has used violence as a negotiating tool. Most of the recent suicide attacks in Israel in the past three or four months were in fact not carried out by Mr. Arafat's rivals in Hamas or Hezbollah or Islamic Jihad but in fact by his Fatah faction's own al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade. In other words, Yasser Arafat has become not just incapable of controlling violence from extraneous terrorist groups that challenge his authority but he has become a direct perpetrator in that terrorism.

At the early stages of this intifada, his Tanzim militia were involved in certain skirmishes with Israeli defence forces, but now we actually have officials in the political organization of Yasser Arafat who are legitimizing and providing infrastructure, support, training, supplies, equipment, funding, military expertise and intelligence and, most odiously, perverse moral instruction to young Palestinian Muslims to go and kill themselves and to savage innocent Israeli civilians simply for the crime of being Jews.

I am all in favour of the idea of evenhandedness, of trying to bring both parties to the table. I support the idea of the Tenet process and the Mitchell report and I hope that perhaps some day we can see the parties there achieve a settlement which looks something like the Camp David accord, where there is a legitimate exchange for land and peace. I think that would be nearly a unanimous sentiment in the House.

However, I am not blinded by desire. To achieve that kind of peace does not blind me to the reality that Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian authority have lost all moral and political authority to be responsible interlocutors in this process today. We cannot negotiate with terrorists and Yasser Arafat and his leadership have opted for terrorism as a tactic. They have opted to use killing civilians in order to generate a crisis which would force the United States and the European Union to intervene to place pressure on Israel to back up.

I must say that I simply do not believe, and I do not think anybody who looks at the evidence ought to believe, in the sincerity of Chairman Arafat any longer. In fact, before his death last year, Faisal Husseini, who was a leading Palestinian so-called moderate, said that "Oslo was a Trojan horse...just a temporary procedure...just a step toward something bigger". That something bigger was "Palestine from the river", the Jordan, "to the sea", the Mediterranean. He said Oslo was "a way of ambushing the Israelis and cheating them".

Ever since Yasser Arafat began his Fatah faction in the early 1960s, prior to the so-called Israeli occupation of Judea and Samaria, he was an advocate of elimination of the Jewish state. There is no compelling evidence to believe that he has changed his fundamental objective.

As we have seen, not only the actions of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade but recently the incursions by the Israeli defence forces into Palestinian headquarters in Ramallah have found hard, concrete evidence that Arafat himself has authorized financing of some of

these death brigades and invoices to finance the acquisition of bombs.

●(0150)

This goes back even to 1974, when the PLO adopted a phased plan for obtaining the Palestinian state. The first phase was to accept any territory, whatever size, offered within Palestine. The second was to make it the forward base for the war to destroy Israel.

It is within this context that the government and the people of Israel are responding to these attacks. This is where I must take sincere exception to some of the moralizing from the Minister of Foreign Affairs who has said that the Israeli response of the past 10 days has been disproportionate.

As a student of Catholic moral philosophy, I have a fairly good sense of what proportionality means. I appreciate it as one of the principles that ought to govern moral considerations of what constitutes a just war. However I fail to see the disproportionate response between a duly elected sovereign government conducting counterterrorism measures, arresting or killing known terrorists, seizing illegal weapons, armaments and explosives and destroying the financial and military infrastructure of terrorists and a deliberate campaign targeting the murder of hundreds of innocent civilians.

To be perfectly absurd, if the Minister of Foreign Affairs is looking for proportionality perhaps the Israelis should dispatch suicide bombers into Palestinian communities.

I think, and some columnists have remarked on this, that perhaps the Minister of Foreign Affairs should consider a little Canadian history. In 1972 two public officials were kidnapped in the province of Quebec. A Liberal government's response to that was to declare martial law and to send tanks into the streets of Montreal. Heaven forbid, if the FLQ had been killing, proportionately to the size of Israel's population, thousands of innocent Canadian civilians, what would our proportionate response have been?

I simply ask the government, in asking for all parties to be restrained and pushing them toward the peace process and Tenet and Mitchell land for peace, not to be blinded by the urgent imperative for Israel to put an end to this immediate threat to the security of its people. That is what Israel is seeking to do in its current military presence in the West Bank.

Because I am something of a pessimist about the opportunities for peace, given what I believe to be the moral corruption of the Palestinian leadership, at least the leadership that we currently know, perhaps we will not end up with a settled negotiated land for peace arrangement.

I wish Colin Powell and the American administration all the best in their interventions. However, if the leadership of Chairman Arafat of the Palestinian authority does not have a fundamental sea change in the coming weeks, I imagine that the Israel government will have to begin looking very seriously at the option of unilateral separation, of erecting an enormous high tech expensive wall unilaterally between areas of a protected Israel and the Palestinian territories. What a terrible result that would be, to end the possibility of these two peoples living together, working together and benefiting from each other's commerce and trade and infrastructure, but that is the direction in which this headed.

In closing, I want to say that if “never again” is more than a slogan, then we must not be too quick to criticize Israel for doing what it little can to defend its sovereignty and security. The Jewish people in the past century have learned what it is to be vulnerable to the ugliness of when violence meets anti-Semitism. They are fighting against that evil today and I submit that we should support them.

● (0155)

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Eglinton—Lawrence.

Today we buried Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother. It was a tremendous day of celebration of a person who lived a very fascinating life through some of the worst that humanity could demonstrate, as well as some of the best. There were a number of religious groups represented at the church ceremony today. They all spoke of peace in the world and the contribution that the Queen Mother made, helping us all have her as a symbol of a peaceful person.

When I became a member of parliament, one of the issues before parliamentarians was the Young Offenders Act. It was a piece of legislation that had been worked and reworked many times over. It conjured up for some people a lot of terrible memories because of personal experiences of family or friends.

I can remember receiving a phone call one day from a gentleman who wanted me to tell parliament immediately that it had to crack down on these young offenders. This person's son had been raped and killed by some people. He was very distraught and desperate that something had to be done to correct it. In this phone conversation he actually asked me how I would like it if he came and got my daughter and did the same things. That incident came to mind as I listened to some of the debate in the House over the last several hours. I found it very enlightening.

The point is that there are people who, because of personal experiences, have become personally, emotionally and totally involved and preoccupied with an event or with a series of events. It means that sometimes it does not matter what is going on, their focus is very clear. We see that as well now in the Middle East.

Imagine this dispute has its genesis I believe right back in 1947 when the UN resolution proposed a partition for a Palestinian state and a Jewish state. Ever since then there have been similar incidents over and over. That means that over the last 50 years we have been developing in the Middle East generations of children who value hate. They have grown up to be young adults harbouring that hate on all sides. They have lost their respect for life as we would know it. Canadians talk about respecting life.

I find it very disturbing because in this global village in which we live there are people who do migrate throughout the world. We saw it with the events of September 11 where ultimately it was found that many of the terrorists had found their way into the United States. They were there legally. Their families had no idea of their involvement but when the time came and they were told to do their jobs, they executed their terrorist acts.

*S. O. 52*

It concerns me that those kinds of things are happening. Canadians have to be fearful as well that these things happen. We see it in our own country. We now have anti-terrorism legislation to safeguard Canadians even more than we thought we ever had to. We have more legislation with regard to security and safety on airlines and at airports because of these terrorist acts.

● (0200)

The impact of terrorist activities, whether they be by terrorists in the Middle East or by the Taliban terrorists, they have affected the entire world and have affected virtually everything we do. We look at things through the lens of terrorism to find out if there are things we should be doing to combat terrorism because we no longer can trust.

This is very disturbing from the standpoint that one would conclude without too much argument that the terrorists are winning this battle. I believe the terrorists are winning. I am not sure whether Canadians at large have a good idea of what the realities are in the Middle East right now. I do know they get some fairly dramatic coverage from some of the media networks. It is hard for us as Canadians to understand how someone could blow himself or herself up, take other lives with them and it is celebrated. It is perverse. It is hard to understand but it happens again and again. The very next day, in the same locales where people have been slaughtered, people are in the streets again carrying on with their lives almost as if nothing has happened.

I ask children from time to time what they think and what they understand about some of these issues. I have a difficult time trying to explain to them the conflict in Ireland between the Catholics and the Protestants, a conflict that went on for so very long and cost so many lives. It is still not clear in my own mind how the hatred even in that country could have gone on so long and why it could not have been arrested by a reasonable people. We do not have reasonable people in the Middle East now.

I wanted to raise those points because they are of concern. Canadians are concerned and fearful. They want to be comforted in the fact that the Government of Canada is doing what it can to allay those fears and to be part of the solution.

It is a complex problem and there is no simple solution. It will not be over soon but we do need a ceasefire. I know that those who are working on behalf of a peace process want to have a ceasefire. We also need to have a clear denunciation of terrorism in all its forms. That has to be a prerequisite to any lasting solution.

We also need to sit down and negotiate a political settlement. I do not think there is win-win solution but, as one member described it, there is a position of least injustice. It will take a great deal of strength, leadership and negotiation on behalf of not only the Palestinians and the Israelis but also of those who are helping to negotiate peace under the auspices of the UN and our allies.

I share the concerns of the people in Canada. We value life and we want to send our best hopes to the leaders of the world to bring this terrible conflict to a path that will ultimately lead to peace.

*S. O. 52*

● (0205)

**Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Mississauga South and other colleagues who have preceded me for their thoughtful and measured observations on what is clearly a most disagreeable set of circumstances in another part of the world.

When I think of the intervention made by my hon. colleague I am thankful that many here have resisted the opportunity to cast blame and aspersions on people, places, circumstances and entire societies. There is blame enough to go around. This is not one of those circumstances where those who want to will not be able to find someone to blame.

Tonight's debate was not designed to give people an opportunity to do anything other than examine the issues and facts that pertain specifically to Canada. It pertains not merely to what Canada has done in the Middle East to promote peace and the betterment of society whether it be Palestinian, Israeli or other. It pertains not merely to the development of a political process in a far away place that has enormous implications for us all. The debate is designed to give us an opportunity to recall that ours is a society that hopes for, works for and breeds peace, acceptance and harmony everywhere.

These values are at great risk today not just in the Middle East but here in Canada. The events there are spilling over into our own society. Inhabitants of our own country which has been the lighthouse of these values are witnessing great acts of intolerance verging on despair, disdain and a lack of respect for the position of others. It has become an opportunity for Canadians to witness intolerance in our own midst. We have seen the emergence of acts of violence, vandalism and intolerance in our midst. Intolerance is the word that best fits as we become completely immersed in the lives, history and destiny of people in the Middle East.

We need to condemn without equivocation any transgressions of Canadian values not only here on Canadian soil but everywhere. Everywhere is an easy thing to condemn because we do not think of the problem as being our own. It is someone else. It is another place that is not as capable as our own society of dealing with the concept of working co-operatively and collaboratively with other people.

Canadians value diversity. We value co-operation. We cannot do without it. I dare say most other people cannot either, but each place in the world has its own history and development. I will not speak from a position of moral superiority because we do not have that. However we need to be able to say some things cannot be accepted in our own society. Outrageous behaviour on our own part, even by people like myself in parliament, cannot be accepted by us, by this place or by our colleagues because of the implications for the rest of society. When Canadians expect parliament to be a place that reflects Canadian values we should exemplify those values.

● (0210)

People ask us as members of parliament what can be done to resolve situations in places like the Middle East. It can be done by example. Some colleagues who spoke before me enumerated Canadian contributions in the Middle East. They demonstrated the way Canadians have gone to the assistance of Palestinians and Israelis.

My hon. colleagues are right. The Canadian position has always been proactive. We try to accomplish what we can by our actions and not just our words. However we need the words. We need to be able to say the right things. We need to be able to lay the groundwork for what our actions must demonstrate more vividly.

We have been doing that. To establish that kind of groundwork and understand what is going on someplace else we need to understand what the impact will be on Canadians, the people who have done their utmost to develop the country to ensure our society is the hallmark of the values I indicated earlier.

Sadly, citizens of Canada and in my own constituency in Toronto feel more isolated now than ever before. It is probably a reflection of the connection so many Canadians feel to the Middle East and in particular to Israel. Why? It is not because Canada is taking one side or another. It is because so many Canadian citizens have friends and family in the Middle East. Israel has become a spiritual and cultural metropolis for all of them. It is where they see their ancestry, history, destiny and lives develop. It does not make them any less Canadian. They enrich our society. They express their views. We are thankful for that. We owe them what we owe all Canadians: the respect associated with appreciating their position.

People have talked in the House about terrorism. They have talked about what is right. They have talked about Israel's right to exist. These are all valuable and valid points of view. We must unequivocally make a decision. Do we accept Israel's right to exist behind safe, secure and recognized borders? If we believe that and urge everyone else to believe it, and if other people in the Middle East including the Palestinians accept it, discussions of peace can make sense.

As a Canadian 8,000 miles away I am not in a position to make judgments. All I know is that like all states we as a country stand behind those with whom we have an agenda to go forward. Canada's agenda is to promote the rule of law, democracy and respect. We have those interests. We have commercial interests as well but I do not want to be crass. We protect our interests and stand by those who move along the same agenda. We call those people our friends.

● (0215)

For this member of parliament, this is a time to stand beside those in a moment of trouble, extreme violence and uncertainty. They need to know that those who have proclaimed the words of friendship, rule of law and democracy are with them even though the times are tough.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, tonight we are debating a very difficult issue, perhaps one of the most difficult issues in the world; how to achieve peace in the Middle East, not just for the sake of the people in that region but for the peace and security of the world, a world threatened by the potential for wider conflict which is always present whenever violence flares in that part of the world.

As I see it, we are dealing with a situation in which both Israelis and Palestinians are victims of history and of each other. They are caught in a vicious cycle of blame and recrimination that has brought them to the abyss.

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One must begin with first things first. As one who has visited Yad Vashem, I begin by considering the recent history of the Jews and the horror of the Holocaust which is the backdrop for the creation of Israel even though Zionism preceded the holocaust.

The Jewish people needed a homeland in which they could be safe and in which they could build a Jewish state and a Jewish society, which indeed they did. Unfortunately, within years of the Holocaust, the brand new state of Israel upon its creation was faced with a united Arab effort to destroy it. What had been recommended by the United Nations, a Jewish state and a Palestinian state, an idea now revived by the Saudis, was rejected in 1948 by the Arab world. The rejection of Israel's right to exist within secure and recognized boundaries took the form of war in 1948, 1967 and in 1973.

This is also the backdrop for the current situation. Israelis have a right to ask that this history of trying to eliminate them be repudiated. If they are going to give up land which they acquired in wars of self-defence, the land in the West Bank and Gaza that we refer to as the occupied territories and much of which was already ceded in recent years from various aspects of the peace process, then they have a right to ask that there be zero tolerance for rejection of Israel's right to exist and zero tolerance for the promotion of hatred against Israel and against Jews.

It cannot be a question of land for false peace or tactical or temporary peace. It has to be a question of real peace being offered for the return of land by a people who have a right to fear the consequences of returning to pre-1967 boundaries without a peace in which they can have confidence.

The Palestinian people are victims also. They are victims of the original miscalculation by the Arab world when Israel was created, especially those who left what was Israel on the basis that they would soon return after the elimination of Israel. Those who are refugees because of what happened at that time and who have lived as refugees for generations now have a right to be depressed, distraught and distressed about the situation. I can try to understand their feelings toward Israel which appears to be the immediate cause of their miserable historical fate, but, I hasten to add, as I said some 20 years ago in the House, I think Palestinians are also victims of the Arab world.

They have been used as a political football and little care has been demonstrated for their well-being by many with the power and the money to make a difference for the ordinary Palestinian.

Palestinians are victims of despair, a despair made much worse by the ongoing construction of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. I believe this Israeli policy to be one of the most serious mistakes Israel has made, a political and moral mistake that will have to be repudiated if peace is to be achieved. This will not be easy, but an occupied territory after all is an occupied territory. That is to say, it is not a conquered territory. It is a territory that has to be seen to be ready to be given back. If it looks like they intend to keep it, it hardly helps to build confidence or trust.

Having said this, I further believe that the Palestinian people are victims of the decision by Yasser Arafat to reject the agreement reached between him and Ehud Barak.

● (0220)

The willingness to negotiate that Mr. Arafat displayed in the 1990s, all the possibilities for hope and peace that were created by that process, and the progress that was created by that process, seemed to be thrown away at the last moment for reasons, whatever they were, that can only seem insufficient given what has followed from that decision.

History may yet judge Mr. Arafat harshly for this, either for missing peace through bad judgment or missing peace deliberately because things were getting too close to a real acceptance of Israel. Mr. Barak on the other hand is to be commended for that historical moment. Mr. Sharon, whose visit to the Temple Mount at a deliberately provocative moment, is not to be commended for what he did then or for what he has done since.

I believe that both the Palestinian people and the Israeli people are victims of elements within their own ranks who have no interest in peace and who go out of their way to sabotage peace whenever it gets close. We know this to be true of Hamas and Hezbollah on the Palestinian side. We know there are elements on the Israeli right, including arguably Mr. Sharon himself, who are not interested in any real peace with the Palestinians.

The real question is whether Mr. Arafat is to be judged to be in this category, whether he is serious about real peace, whether he really deplors and did all he could to eliminate terrorism, and whether he is willing once again to come to the negotiating table and stay even after peace is in sight. Time will tell and I hope we have the opportunity to make that judgment.

As to what is happening in the occupied territories at the moment, I share the view that while Israeli rage at suicide bombings is more than understandable, the response has been ill-advised in its scope and in strategic terms.

One can be a friend of Israel, as I consider myself to be, and still criticize it. One can be a friend of Israel and still wonder whether certain strategies are counterproductive and whether they will only lead to more violence. One can be a critic of Israel and not be anti-Semitic, although I would share the concern expressed by some that the boundary between criticism of Israeli government policy and anti-Semitism is blurred when attacks on synagogues in western countries accompany criticism of Israel.

I do not want to be part of a critique of Israeli government policy that is tolerant of hatred of Jews, nor do I want to be a friend of an Israel that looks the other way when something wrong is being done. For my part Mr. Arafat clearly should reject terrorism, reject the rejectionists in his own camp, and reject hatred of Jews and its promotion.

As for the phenomena of suicide bombings, even if they are promoted and organized, and surely if they are, this is a reprehensible strategy. This strategy could still only be successfully achieved because there exists a bottomless pit of despair to exploit, exacerbated by hatred and violence.

*S. O. 52*

When young women start blowing themselves up, when teenagers at nightclubs enjoying themselves are bombed, when families are killed at Passover, when a powerful army finds itself arrayed against the relatively powerless, whether they be civilians or combatants, the world should take note. It is time for reflection but it is also time for action.

I urge the government to consider support for strong international action. There will be people on both sides of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict who do not like it but they have had their way for too long already. Both Israelis and Palestinians deserve a safe, secure, just and democratic homeland. There were to be two states in the beginning. Let the world now make it so. In the meantime friends of Israel should not shrink from holding it to a high standard, even a higher standard, just as we do with the United States and with other friends of ours.

● (0225)

I know this is frustrating sometimes but it is necessary. It is a compliment because it is a sign of a shared value system. It is a sign that we share a value system when such demands are made.

In conclusion if I might appeal to the scriptures that as a Christian I look to in common with the Jewish people. This is not the time to scorn the reality, that there is always room for the prophetic perspective, that perspective which does not uncritically accept that when we are wronged that we therefore can do no wrong in responding to that wrong.

The prophetic tradition was one of calling for a trust in God and for trust in doing justice. In the same vein I call on religious leaders in the Palestinian community, out of the same shared scriptures to condemn those who would counsel and equip young Palestinians to take their God given lives through suicide bombing.

● (0230)

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to participate in this critically important debate on the ever worsening crisis in the Middle East. It has been a night of much emotion, some deeply held views and some very constructive and thoughtful proposals.

Whatever our differences in this House, after this dialogue, it is clear that we are all here in the pursuit of peace. We are here as the member for Mount Royal has said, out of reverence for life and we are here with the determination to make a difference.

Many have said tonight, particularly the member for Winnipeg South Centre, there are no easy answers. The history of conflict in the Middle East is complex, long-standing and difficult. As we search together for an appropriate role for Canada to pursue the cause of peace in the Middle East there are clearly no quick fixes or easy, simple solutions.

How then do we make a difference? We begin by understanding, not judging. We begin by condemning all violence not assigning blame. As others have said tonight there is enough blame to go around. What we need to do is talk about stopping the violence, the retaliation and the suicide bombing.

We respond tonight on an emergency basis not to one singular development but to a sequence of events that has seen violence on

both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is a reaction to the Israeli army in the territories and the acts of violence against innocent Palestinians in refugee camps, but just as much, it is about the suicide bombings, the terrorist attacks by Palestinians against citizens of Israel, against innocent women, children and civilians in that nation. It is about people living in fear, scared out of their minds, suffering untold horrors and loss of loved ones.

Our response as Canadians flows from this knowledge and understanding about the deteriorating situation between Israel and Palestine and how it is taking such a horrible human toll on all sides in all parts of the region. It is that understanding combined with a realization of the historical context in which current events take place that perhaps direct our action.

Let us remember as others have done tonight that the state of Israel was established to provide a secure national home for the persecuted Jewish people following the horrors of the Holocaust and the long history of discrimination, the anti-Semitism which continues to the present day.

Today of all days when we mark Holocaust remembrance day it is time to remember the horror of genocide and to resolve again to combat all forms of racism, prejudice and injustice. Any historical overview also reminds us of the millions of Palestinians who are left without a homeland and at present live as refugees in military occupation for insecure territories governed by the Palestinian authority. We are acutely aware that the situation has left both sides without security or the means of enjoying their inalienable human rights.

The pursuit of peace must reflect this history. It must recognize the need for secure borders on both sides. It must support the idea, the dream of a Jewish homeland and secure borders for the state of Israel. It must also recognize the need for the economic and political security for Palestinians in the camps and support an independent Palestinian state. It means not only calling for Israel to pull out of the territories but also recognizing the support and compensation for resettlement must come not just from Israel, but from Arab nations as well and from the broader international community.

● (0235)

It means a proactive role for the Canadian government in the cause of peace, a role in terms of political pressure, a role as impartial observers, a role as peacekeeping forces, a role in terms of humanitarian aid, a role in terms of support for resettlement and a role in terms of ongoing monitoring of any peace proposal that is arrived at. Far better for Canada to try, perhaps to fail and perhaps to make mistakes, than to do nothing.

As Canadian author Margaret Laurence wrote just before her death in 1983:

I would agree that despair is rightly placed as one of the deadly sins. The problems of our world will not go away if we ignore them. It is not all happening on TV, it is happening on our earth, and we, humankind, are the custodians of that earth. We cannot afford passivity. We must take on responsibility for our lives and our world and we must be prepared to make our government listen to and hear us. Our aim must be no less than human and caring justice and peace...for all people that on earth do dwell.

S. O. 52

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank the hon. member for Mercier for bringing forward the motion we are debating tonight which has allowed us the opportunity to take part in an emergency debate on the Middle East.

I hope to be part of a parliamentary delegation that will visit the West Bank and Gaza in the coming months. In preparing for that trip I have tried to comprehend and even imagine how I and my neighbours would feel if we were under occupation. I have tried to imagine what it would be like if ambulances could not get through. I have tried to imagine what it would be like if people were bleeding to death and could not get to the hospital. I have tried to think about what it would mean if my son could not go to school or was rounded up because he was over 18 and Christian. I have tried to imagine how I would feel if I were not allowed to work or my home were taken from me and the world did not care. I know I would feel angry and desperate and feel that there was no hope.

However those are the realities for the world's largest refugee population and for a people who have been dispossessed.

I have tried to educate myself to have an understanding of what it means when a whole population has been held hostage and stripped of every human and democratic right as we are seeing today. It is ironic and horrifying to me that the state of Israel, which prides itself on being a democratic country, has nothing left now but a campaign of brutality and militarism against civilians. Let us not forget that this is also a state with nuclear weapons and nuclear capability but somehow that is always overlooked in favour of other demons close by.

It is so easy to fall prey to the question of sides as though this were a situation of equals battling it out, but it is not. If we look at any map of the area we will see the highways that have been deliberately constructed to link illegal settlements and isolate Palestinian communities. We can see the geographically divided Palestinian territories now held captive by illegal occupation. We can see the refugee camps where temporary has become permanent and life becomes a struggle with death.

I attended my colleague's press conference this morning, the member for Burnaby—Douglas. I want to voice my support and show my respect for his courage to speak out and to bear witness firsthand to the activities and the brutality that are taking place. During his press conference he talked about attending a huge rally in Tel Aviv on Saturday night of 15,000 Israelis protesting Sharon's horrible war. This rally received no coverage here because that would confuse our understanding of what is manufactured for public consumption.

I know many Canadian Palestinians and Canadian Jews find it difficult to carry on with their Canadian lives when their relatives,

friends and home communities are under threat of violence and destruction. How can any community survive and be intact when suicide bombings are taking place? Surely there must be a recognition that the retaliation of brutal violence by Israeli defence forces is creating a poisoned environment and devastation that is the antithesis of justice and peace. Sharon may continue his personal war but we are complicit if we stand by and do nothing.

I also know that Canadian NGOs, both here and in the occupied territories, as evidenced by Oxfam-Québec, are seeing their efforts, their services and their carefully built infrastructure literally blown to bits. What utter waste, what sense of hopelessness and what new form of state terror has been unleashed in the name of democracy delivered through the shells of a tank.

Earlier this evening the leader of the NDP spoke passionately when she called on our government to have the courage to stand with the international community and to be unequivocal in condemning the illegal reoccupation of Palestinian lands and people. I have heard many fine speeches tonight and I am sure that we all want the same thing.

• (0240)

Yet there is this feeling, and it has even been echoed by some members on the government side, that Canada has become impotent, misguided at best and cowardly at worst. If there is anything that comes of this debate tonight it must be a commitment that we will use our democratic rights to insist that a just political settlement be found. It must be a settlement that recognizes the sovereign lands of both Palestinian and Israeli states, but it will only happen if the illegal military occupation ends forthwith and the right of refugees to return is also recognized.

I cannot believe that the Canadian government voted against the resolution in Geneva last week mandating the UN human rights commissioner to investigate and observe the situation, basically to do her job. Tonight the government has heard from all sides of the House and now our government must act. I ask government members to please not be their usual wimpy selves. They should act to defend international law. They should act to end the military occupation by Israel. They should act to create the social and political environment from which peace can evolve.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am satisfied that the debate has now been concluded and therefore declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Accordingly the House stands adjourned until 2 p.m. later this day pursuant to Standing Order 24.

(The House adjourned at 2.44 a.m.)



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