



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Thursday, February 6, 2003**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, February 6, 2003

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to nine petitions.

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### PUBLIC SERVICE MODERNIZATION ACT

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-25, An Act to modernize employment and labour relations in the public service and to amend the Financial Administration Act and the Canadian Centre for Management Development Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

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### POINT OF ORDER

#### STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

**Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In a few minutes you will be hearing two statements by ministers and replies from the other parties.

Traditionally, the government provides copies of ministers' statements to members, members on the other side of the House, and this was done.

Less than an hour after one of these documents was provided to the opposition, the opposition spokesperson was giving interviews to the media in connection with the document. At that time, moreover, phone calls were made to the office of the minister, seeking his reaction to the statements made by the opposition, which had just scooped the announcement to be made by the minister the following day.

If ministers are supposed to reserve their statements for the House, out of courtesy, parliamentarians must respect embargoes.

This must be put to the House immediately, in order to avoid any repetition of such an occurrence. Otherwise, we shall have to resort to doing the strict minimum, which is to provide copies of statements an hour before they are tabled.

That is what the standing orders require, but the convention has been to try to do more than that, in the spirit of cooperation. This is not possible, however, unless everyone respects the rules.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I was just talking to the government House leader. I just learned about this a short while ago. I certainly agree with the House leader that this is a process that has happened for a long time and it should be respected.

The member involved is not here today. It is still a little early on the west coast but I am doing my best to reach that member. I am sure he will want to apologize to the minister if in fact this is what happened.

• (1010)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to add my voice to that of my colleagues and say to the minister that I share his opinion.

The minister can continue to do what has already been done here, in the House—if apologies are offered then we will see—that is, to put this question to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, because we have already criticized similar behaviour by ministers of this government.

[*English*]

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would very briefly like to point out that if the House leader for the government maintains that the information was circulated in advance of the release and somebody released it to the media, it certainly could not have been the NDP because we were not given the courtesy of receiving any advance information regarding either of these bills. Therefore, for the record, the NDP did not release this information.

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I also agree with what the government House leader said. Statements given to us for a response must be held in secret until they are tabled in the House.

*Routine Proceedings*

However, let me say to the government House leader that this works both ways. It also works in relation to committees.

Yesterday morning in the House a report in relation to the coast guard was tabled. Yesterday morning, before the report was tabled, I read interviews in the newspaper that were done on the report by government members saying that the Liberals were pressing the government. The Liberals had very little to do with it. It has to work both ways.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** I believe these interventions send a very clear message. The Chair most certainly agrees that the previous collaboration should continue. Each party must be responsible and respect the unwritten rule; if a document has not been tabled in the House, it is to remain secret.

That said, we will resume the daily routine of business.

The hon. President of the Treasury Board.

\* \* \*

**PUBLIC SERVICE MODERNIZATION ACT**

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure, as you know, that I table today the Public Service Modernization Act.

Each and every member of this House is here for the same reason: to serve Canadians. The Government serves Canadians, here at home and abroad, largely through the work of a competent, professional public service. This bill ensures the capacity of the public service to provide the best services to Canadians today and in the future, to continue to make important contributions to the quality of life of Canadians.

In the Speech From the Throne on January 30, 2001, the Government committed to “—the reforms needed for the Public Service of Canada to...[be] able to attract and develop the talent needed to serve Canadians in the 21st century”.

The Task Force on Modernizing Human Resources Management was established in April that year, with a mandate to recommend a modern policy, legislative and institutional framework for human resources management.

• (1015)

[*English*]

The bill fulfills that commitment and that mandate. It is a critical step in the ongoing process of public service modernization, providing the foundation needed to allow the public service to attract, retain and develop the people it needs and to maintain a healthy and productive workplace to serve Canadians.

The bill would make major changes to the current legislative framework underpinning human resources management in the public service. It includes two new acts, a new public service employment act and a new public service labour relations act, and amends the Financial Administration Act and the Canadian Centre for Management Development Act.

We live in a constantly evolving world. The current legislation governing human resources management has changed little over the past three decades and no longer permits us to meet new challenges.

Our world has changed greatly over that period. Public service work is becoming more and more complex and fast paced. It requires employees and managers to be more flexible and to adapt to varying demands and circumstances.

[*Translation*]

Technological advances and globalization are contributing to an accelerated pace of change, one that challenges the innovative capacity of the public service. The public service cannot fall behind if it is to serve effectively.

The public's expectations of government will continue to increase. Citizens are demanding not only better services, but also more efficient management of resources and a greater level of participation in making decisions.

Competition for talent with the private sector and with other governments is going to intensify in an increasingly tight labour market. Large numbers of public servants are expected to retire over the next decade and will need to be replaced.

The public service will have to respond. We must give the public service the tools it needs to meet these challenges.

[*English*]

The bill is a comprehensive and carefully measured package of proposals. It represents a balanced approach, establishing the foundation needed to allow the public service to change the way it does its business and compete effectively to attract and retain the people it needs.

It provides for increased flexibility in staffing and managing people to help achieve results and meet new operational requirements better, combined with reinforced safeguards to protect merit in staffing and address possible abuses in the system.

The bill also provides for more co-operative labour-management relations to support a healthy, productive workplace while ensuring that the government can continue to manage the public service in the public interest. It supports more coherent training and development for employees to help them pursue their professional development and ensure that they have the skills and knowledge they need to do their jobs now and in the future.

*Routine Proceedings*

[*Translation*]

It also clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the key players in human resources management—the Treasury Board, the Public Service Commission and deputy heads—with new measures to strengthen accountability at all levels, including better reporting to Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, these are important goals—indeed, they are important requirements—in the modernization of the public service and public service management. They must be realized to ensure that the public service will continue to be able to serve Canadians with excellence into the 21st century.

This Bill provides the foundation for the transformation of public service management. It is with pleasure that I will work with all members of this House to improve the way in which we manage public service employees, with the ultimate objective of providing the best possible services for our constituents.

[*English*]

**Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and acknowledge, on behalf of the Canadian Alliance and the taxpayer, that the minister has made a positive statement of intent in the tabling of the public service modernization act.

We must ensure that we truly have a modern, flexible human resource management. In our party we have always valued the dedicated work of government employees, who have often, over the years, had to work under poor political leadership and uncertainty that their jobs would be eliminated in another reorganization of a ministry.

All members in the House are aware of past confrontational styles of union-management relations and even a controlling work culture. It is not a healthy sign when many employees have their union contract book as the most prominent document on their desks.

I am mindful of the debate in the House last evening where my caucus colleagues were pleading with the government, on behalf of public servants, for basic whistleblower protection for average employees. Many examples were given in the debate where dedicated employees have done their duties to observe and report significant problems and even wrongdoing to then later find out that it was particularly embarrassing to the government. It was the dutiful worker who was disciplined or dismissed rather than the public interest being served.

We are mindful of the evaluation of the Auditor General in 2001. The quote is:

The legislative and management framework for public service recruitment requires radical change to ensure that new systems and practices will be more responsive to both the operational requirements of departments and the long term needs of the public service.

I am pleased to hear that the minister is trying to improve both the culture of government service and the local climate of the workplace for our loyal public employees. This is being done for both productivity and for service to the country.

I am pleased to hear of the reaffirmation of ongoing quality training. Moreover, it is hoped that the new measures to strengthen

accountability at all levels, including better reporting to Parliament, will indeed be delivered.

Being a government employee should be seen as an honourable and rewarding career choice. Canada should be able to attract its brightest and best into public service. We will be able to do this if the context is thoroughly professional, the standards are high and the personal rewards of compensation and workplace meaning are significant.

It is hoped that as we examine the details and the implications of this bill that we can eventually get to the point that we have a collaborative union-management culture where the public interest of Canada comes first and that it will be freely given rather than coerced. We need a climate of respect and, above all, a consciousness of the taxpayer for all government activity in whose name we all perform.

I am pleased to hear that the minister is open to some adjustments to the bill as the need may emerge during the legislative process at the committee stage. In response, our party will not be confrontational for partisan considerations. As a true government in waiting, the last thing we would contemplate from our side is to play politics with the lives of public service employees. However there are concerns about continued geographic discrimination and hiring, and the unwise use of affirmative action policies.

Canada is a great country. Moreover, working in the Canadian federal public service is quite good in comparison to the situation for employees of governments around the world. Nevertheless, things could be much better. There is no reason why Canada cannot become the best by receiving the best from its very best. It is all under our own control within our own borders. It is up to us.

Canada is great, not because we have had great leaders or great governments but because of average Canadians who have built this society and have sacrificed when called upon to make our country a better place to live. Public employees have worked to secure the nation. They strive to build a stable foundation despite unstable times.

The minister now implies that there will be a positive break with the past. We in the official opposition will perform our constructive part to ensure that positive values are reflected in the legislation.

We look forward to being completely engaged in this honourable project that the President of the Treasury Board has brought to the House this day.

● (1020)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I first want to congratulate the minister for having taken the initiative to make this change to legislation that has not been amended for at least 35 years. Clearly, this legislation needed to be updated. Of course, the Bloc Québécois will participate in improving this bill.

During the briefing we got this morning, we could, unfortunately, already see the bill's shortcomings. However, the minister told us that she is willing to consider all amendments in order to improve the bill.

*Routine Proceedings*

I think that, as far as public servants are concerned, it is not just a bill that will bring about this change. The new management needs to be improved so much that they might as well start from scratch.

The bill will at least provide us with a point of reference against which to compare the existing relationships between the employer, the government and the unions. The workers themselves are the most important of all. They should, at least, be able to be proud, in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada, of competently delivering services. These are services for the public. They are the reason that public servants are paid and that we pay taxes.

Public servants and senior management must be able to give their views. Of course, a very important provision, to protect whistle-blowers, is missing from this bill. There is nothing in the bill that allows public servants to do their job properly.

I say this because, this week again, the person responsible for informatics refused to answer the questions put to her, saying that the minister responsible would provide the answers. She is, however, one of the managers in charge of this issue.

It is essential to clearly protect these people who could provide us with the information we need, and that they not fear doing so, so that this information can be provided to the public.

Of course, the Bloc Quebecois will participate actively in the work of the committee. The committee will certainly study the bill in question in the hope that this legislation will bring about a change in culture, that there will be fewer political appointments, and that people will be judged on their abilities, so that the public service is truly active and responsible.

• (1025)

[English]

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this could be a big day for Canada's 150,000 civil servants. Reform has never been so urgent as it is today. This has been a long awaited and a much ballyhooed announcement by the minister. I compliment the President of the Treasury Board for this ambitious undertaking.

When it was first announced nearly two years ago, many of us rolled our eyes and shook our heads in disbelief. Many of us have seen frustrated attempts to impose a change in culture in the civil service. We have seen these attempts come and go over the years. However I have confidence this time that we may be able to make meaningful changes. These are not just bureaucratic changes. These changes will be enshrined in legislation. The House of Commons will be seized with the issue and politicians will be involved, not just bureaucrats.

Perhaps it is this President of the Treasury Board who may bring these changes through because of the sensibilities she brings from the province of Quebec where unions are recognized as an integral part of civil society. They are not struggling for recognition as they are in the world of the Canadian Alliance. Unions play a meaningful part in this whole process.

I made the point that reform has never been so necessary. The civil service—

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

**Mr. Pat Martin:** As soon as the peanut gallery finishes, Mr. Speaker, I will continue.

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson:** You are standing in it.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** The civil service is justifiably demoralized after years of the madness of program review. Thirty thousand jobs were slashed. There were seven years of wage freezes. The previous president of the Treasury Board took \$30 billion out of the public service pension plan surplus without any consultation with employees who owned that money. Confidence is at a new all time low. Productivity is down and so is morale. All these issues need to be addressed.

I am relieved and pleased to hear that a new Public Service Labour Relations Act will be imposed. When public employees won the right to free collective bargaining in 1967, there was never a proper labour relations regime imposed at that time. Therefore the massive public service has been floundering in a grey zone with no clear definition of how the collective bargaining regime should be operated, short of putting it under the Canada Labour Code. We are optimistic that a new labour relations act will finally give satisfaction to many of these long outstanding issues.

We in the NDP will be paying close attention to the bill as it moves forward. We hope that the recommendations of the Fryer commission, a long comprehensive study that took place leading up to the introduction of the bill, will be included in the bill. We will look for these changes. We do not want to just tinker with the act. We want to make substantive changes that will change the lives, the quality of work life and job satisfaction, which is so important if we are to expect productivity in the public sector.

• (1030)

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I too am very pleased to rise today in response to the President of the Treasury Board who has brought forward what I believe to be very positive proposed legislation which neither I nor my party have had an opportunity to look at yet. The public service modernization act is something that is direly needed in the House and could assist in developing a public sector within government.

First, I congratulate the President of the Treasury Board for making the statement in the House. I heard the House leader of the government cry crocodile tears when he suggested that some of the information was perhaps put forward prior to the minister's statement. That statement should have been made here and dealt with in the House. However I should also say I have seen too many statements and too many ministers of the Crown make public statements at a press conference as opposed to in the House. I congratulate the President of the Treasury Board for doing it in the right place, at the right time, and I thank her for that.

There is a very simple philosophy. Too many people in our society today view a public servant as being an individual who has a government job and is just walking through the motions. That is not the case. I can assure everyone that as a member of Parliament I deal with the employees of the public service on a regular basis. For the most part, the majority of them are there for the right reasons. They want to do a job on behalf of Canadians. They have a job, they have an outline of what they are responsible for and they try their darndest under those circumstances to ensure Canadians are served to the best of their ability.

For the most part public servants certainly are there for the right reasons. However I also follow a management philosophy that I learned a long time ago in another life; that direction comes from the top. Direction comes from their political masters. That is perhaps something that is missing in the legislation. Too often the public servants, and the public service, are the ones who take the brunt and the controversy for positions taken by the departments, the ministers particularly, and managerial positions of a higher level than the individuals providing the service. Unfortunately, in the past the government has gone down the wrong path.

I can talk about things like the gun registry. This is a policy of the government and it has been terribly mismanaged. Do not blame the public servants. Blame the leaders, the political masters, for that particular direction.

I can talk about the HRDC. Decisions were made not by the public servants who were supposed to manage those portfolios but by the political masters who sent them down the wrong path.

I think of the sponsorship scandals. An individual, who is no longer with us in the House, was given a reward by being sent to another country, but the public servants took the brunt of that.

I thank the minister for bringing forward perhaps some legislation that could put better into place some protections for those public servants as opposed to having to take the brunt for political masters.

I also am very pleased with some of the broad outlines as put forward today by the minister. Of course the public servants should have the ability to compete with private sector compensation packages. There is no question about it. We have to get the brightest and the best to ensure that we provide the best services to Canadians, and that is by way of compensation packages.

We have the labour management relationships. From another life again, I can honestly take great pride in suggesting that the best labour management relationship is one that is working toward the same goal. Yes, there will be disagreements, but sit at the table and make those disagreements go away so that everyone achieves a win-win situation. That is very positive. We have not seen that in the past. It is important that we develop those relationships, ones that are better than what they are currently. I and my colleagues will be very happy to sit at the table, to sit in committee and to listen to the positive aspects of this legislation going forward.

There are others things such as whistleblowing, as was mentioned. That is something with which we have to deal. We need to have some protections in place for those people who come forward for the betterment of the public service.

### *Routine Proceedings*

Again, I congratulate the minister and look forward to working with her at committee to ensure that we put the best legislation forward on behalf of the public service.

\* \* \*

### CANADIAN COAST GUARD

**Hon. Robert Thibault (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to say a few words regarding the Canadian Coast Guard's diving program in British Columbia.

As we know, on August 13, 2002, a tragic accident involving the *Cap Rouge II* claimed the lives of five people off the coast of British Columbia. Since that time I have shared with Canadians, and indeed with the House, the information and advice I received from officials about the Canadian Coast Guard's role in the incident and the dive policy in general.

Before I go further I would like to thank the leaders from all parties, and in particular the government House leader, for ensuring that the incident of the leak of the statement yesterday was indeed a single occurrence that will not be repeated and that we can continue with confidence in matters such as these.

We have undertaken a comprehensive review of the program in order to gain a full and complete picture of it. Today, as a result of this work, I am announcing that we are implementing a full time, full service, dive program at Sea Island in British Columbia.

The program will include a full dive team and backup team 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and will allow divers to enter submerged vehicles and vessels.

While we have always provided 24/7 rescue services overall, diving has been available on a limited basis. Today's announcement means that we will be working toward providing diving services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to match our overall rescue services and give citizens in the area more comprehensive coverage.

The new dive program complements the Coast Guard's search and rescue program that is second to none in the world, while at the same time providing for the safety of our divers.

● (1035)

[*Translation*]

As I was saying a few moments ago, I am convinced that we have reviewed all the measures associated with the program since the tragic accident in August, and we have examined all the possibilities for maintaining the diving services at Sea Island.

We have also taken into account the advice we have received with regard to the Canada Shipping Act and the Canada Labour Code.

We are also endeavouring to thoroughly review to what extent additional skills would be applicable for providing support services for dives that require entry into submerged vehicles or vessels.

Truth be told, it is a complex issue that involves numerous pieces of legislation, codes and directives, as well as various federal partners and skills. The implementation of an integrated diving program will take time.

*Routine Proceedings*

We are going to have to recruit more divers and ensure that all divers receive the necessary training and equipment to perform their duties.

In the meantime, until we have the necessary staff and the services are well established, the Coast Guard will continue to provide search and rescue services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in the sector.

[English]

I would like to assure the House that the Canadian Coast Guard's top priority remains the same as it has always been, to protect the lives of Canadians at sea. Nothing will change.

At the same time, it is imperative that our procedures are compliant with the laws that are in place to protect all Canadians, including our divers. That is why I have taken action and made an important first step toward meeting these goals and giving British Columbians the diving services they value.

I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, and all members of the House, that my commitment to sharing information on this matter will continue as we implement the full service, full time dive program at Sea Island, British Columbia.

**Mr. Andy Burton (Skeena, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to review some of the events that have led the minister to make the decision and announcement he has made in the House today.

Make no mistake, the minister would not be making these changes to the Coast Guard if fatal accidents had not forced him to take a closer look at the irresponsible cuts his department made to the funding of our Coast Guard and its rescue dive operations.

On February 16, 2001, the then minister of fisheries cancelled the rescue dive team. Two days later, Paul Sandhu died after his car plunged into the Fraser River, only 400 metres from the dive team's home base. The dive team came to the scene but were ordered not to dive. Not long afterward, the minister of fisheries ordered a review of his decision to cancel the rescue dive team.

On July 19, 2001, the fisheries minister reinstated the dive team but not as a rescue dive team. Divers were only allowed to retrieve someone floating on the surface. As a result, those trapped in submerged fishing vessels were to be written off. The divers protested. They wanted no part of it. They claimed that the rules now meant that the only person they would be able to rescue would be someone who had fallen off a dock. Divers were told to follow orders and shut up.

An internal directive on the new no dive policy dated September 3, 2001, stated:

...procedures have been written to comply exactly with the Minister's announcement...Penetration of submerged...vessels is prohibited, exactly as stated in the signed off Fleet Safety Manual...

This is not open to interpretation, Mr. Speaker. It continues:

I would expect...divers to support our efforts to meet the requirements of the Minister's announcement as quickly as possible.

On August 13, 2002, when the *Cap Rouge II* went down with the loss of five lives including a mother and her two children, the minister said that the dive team ought to have known they could have dived.

Nothing could have been further from the truth. First, the directive of September 3, 2001, made it abundantly clear there was to be no diving because the minister had ordered that there be none. Second, our Coast Guard divers could not have safely dived because their surface air equipment had been disposed of. They were forced to rely on air tanks which ran out of supply shortly after arriving at the site.

The Coast Guard talking points on the *Cap Rouge II* incident made it very clear that the Coast Guard did not believe in rescue diving. They state:

Resources must be put where they will do the most good. —It's absolutely clear that a dollar spent on prevention or surface rescue activities will do more, by far, to save lives than a dollar spent on diving.

I hope that is not the message to the next person who is trapped in an overturned fishing vessel.

Today, the minister does not want to be held to account. He claims we should only look at his latest promises for the future. The truth is that after those two tragedies the government would have us believe that this time it is actually going to reinstate the rescue dive team.

Well, it is not so; not yet anyway. The fleet safety manual has been partially changed, but it only allows rescue dives to submerged vessels when divers have been given surface air equipment to do those dives and have been trained to use it.

While the surface air equipment has now arrived, training will not be completed for at least six months. We do not yet have a rescue dive team that is back in the business of doing rescue dives. We only have promises.

When the rescue dive team is called to the scene of an accident, our divers must have the training and equipment to make the dives and must have the authority to make that dive. I am not sure we are there yet. I pray we will be soon.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans did not offer in his statement an apology to the families of those who died aboard the *Cap Rouge II* as a result of the funding decisions taken by his department. There was no apology offered to the divers who were ordered not to dive and who the minister publicly claimed could have dived if they had known the rules.

In closing, lives have been lost and the Coast Guard's rescue divers have been tortured by memories of events. It is high time the government once again put a priority on saving lives.



*Routine Proceedings*

•(1040)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Matapédia—Matane, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague indicated earlier, it is important to remember that the initiative announced today by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans follows the loss of five lives on August 13, 2002, when the *Cap Rouge II* capsized off the coast of British Columbia.

It is indeed a good initiative, but it is unfortunate that a tragic accident had to happen before the department took action and the Government of Canada decided to invest in a training program for divers. This program will help respond to this kind of emergency in the future.

We will recall that, in November, we had a take note debate on the Canadian Coast Guard. Its underfunding was widely commented on at the time.

I feel that this organization has deficiencies, not because of the services it provides—services the people of Quebec and Canada know little about, I might add—but because of its underfunding, which is chronic. Because of the cuts made over time, the Canadian Coast Guard has become an organization with problems that need to be addressed urgently.

What happened on September 11, while it was a tragedy, was a wake up call for Canada, bringing home the important role played by the Canadian Coast Guard. Canada realized that this is an essential organization and that it is underfunded.

I congratulate the minister on the initiative he has put forward today, but I should point out that this initiative is not providing any new money to the Canadian Coast Guard. The funding earmarked for the new program, that is \$300,000 now and \$1 million a year thereafter, does not represent new money. It means that the CCG will have to shoulder additional costs of \$1 million without money being added to its budget.

I would like to support the minister in his initiative. I hope that the Minister of Finance will invest more in the Canadian Coast Guard. This would ensure that this organization is well structured, will have the resources to operate and will be able to respond to emergencies and to the needs of the public in Canada and Quebec.

•(1045)

[*English*]

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise on behalf of the federal NDP, as well as the provincial NDP of British Columbia, to thank the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans for his initiative today. I also wish to thank the hon. member for Richmond. My former home town of Sea Island is in his riding. I know that many people there are very pleased with the announcement today, but we still have some concerns.

Out of every tragedy, one hopes that something can be learned from it, that we can learn from the mistakes and ensure that if another tragedy happens, which in all likelihood will, the dive team in this specific case will be able to perform its function adequately and with enough resources and trained personnel in order to prevent these types of incidents from happening again.

What the minister has failed to mention is the fact that this is a reallocation of resources within the department, a department that is already starved for financial and personnel resources. That is something we have great difficulty with because this is a very important aspect of the Coast Guard. We are pleased that he has made this announcement, but what other part of the Coast Guard will have to suffer because of the transfer of allocation of resources?

We on this side of the House would encourage and support the minister wholeheartedly in his discussions with the finance minister to ensure that the Coast Guard and DFO for that matter receive the adequate resources and personnel they need to carry out the functions that they so heartily deserve for the protection of all Canadians.

We support the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans for this initiative. We support the government in ensuring safety, especially in the area of Sea Island. We support the minister in acquiring future resources for the Coast Guard and DFO and to ensure that the union is fully aware of all the concerns relating to this. We want to ensure it stays within the public service of the Coast Guard. We want to ensure that not only in this area but in other aspects of the country the Coast Guard is fully prepared to meet its obligations in terms of safety for all mariners.

Again, we thank the hon. minister and encourage him to continue with this practice. We will be there to support him in any way that we can.

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC):** Mr. Speaker, let me congratulate the minister on this initiative today. Certainly it is something that all of us in the House have looked forward to and appreciate his doing.

Let me also congratulate him on making his statement here in the House. I think it is extremely important, which was said earlier in relation to a statement made by the minister responsible for the Treasury Board who also came to the House with a statement rather than, as most ministers do, running to the press.

Here we have a chance to respond and discuss so that people across the country get the news firsthand and also can get the views of the other parties in relation to the statement.

Having said that, let me say that the statement we have before us is an extremely positive one. However, there are some concerns. The result that we will see because of the minister's decision came about because of a couple of major accidents in this area, accidents that perhaps would not have occurred if we had had clear cut lines of responsibility and jurisdiction. I think that is probably going to be the minister's greatest challenge. He acknowledges in his statement that there are complexities in relation to the rules and regulations.

The minister himself is not responsible for other departments involved, but government is. When we have rules and regulations that govern different departments, and when one department might be held up in making a decision because of the effect on some other department's legislation or regulation, it can be extremely serious. Also, it is so easy then to pass on the blame. The initiative is on government to make sure that there are clear-cut jurisdictions, particularly when it comes to life and death situations.

*Supply*

Also in relation to that, it is imperative that decisions in such a case be made on site. We cannot afford in a life saving situation to wait for somebody to contact Ottawa, not to say an office next door. If firemen go to fight a fire or policemen go to a dangerous situation, the decisions are made by somebody in charge on site. They do not try to call St. John's or Ottawa or Halifax to get permission to make a move to save somebody's life. These decisions have to be made immediately.

One of the problems that this young, inexperienced minister faces, and I know that he is willing to learn, is that he has a major bureaucracy in Ottawa. Too many decisions are made down the street here by people who have no idea of what is going on in the regions.

I suggest to the minister that more power should be given to the regions, with more decision making authority within the regions for responsible people who know what is going on in the regions. Then situations such as those we have experienced, which caused him to make the decision today, will never happen again.

Having said that, I congratulate the minister on the initiative. He can only work with what he has and hopefully we will see other changes which will benefit the people who work in the Coast Guard and particularly the residents of Canada themselves.

• (1050)

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the government could inform the House when the Prime Minister will be reporting to the House on his meetings yesterday with the premiers and territorial leaders concerning health funding. Since he has not risen in his place today, should we expect a statement tomorrow?

The Prime Minister owes an explanation to the House and the people we represent—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** No, I am sorry. That is not a point of order. As tradition goes, I take it for granted that he will be here this afternoon. Questions will be asked and the Prime Minister will then supply the House and the Canadian public with the answers on health care.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108, your committee has conducted a study and held hearings on the role and responsibilities of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission in developments in the area of Official Languages in Canada. On Tuesday, February 4 it agreed to report it.

The report contains five recommendations, three of which are essentially directed at the CRTC and two at the government, on which we are calling, pursuant to the Standing Orders, to table a response within the required period.

[English]

**PETITIONS**

## STEM CELL RESEARCH

**Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present a petition from constituents of mine concerning reproductive technology.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to focus its legislative support on adult stem cell research to find the cures and therapies necessary to treat the illnesses and diseases of suffering Canadians.

• (1055)

## CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from my constituents in regard to child pornography. I have seen tens of thousands of names on petitions like it go through the House already. The petitioners would like to ensure that all materials which promote or glorify pedophilia or other perverse activities involving children are outlawed.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**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 Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statements government orders will be extended by 40 minutes.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**SUPPLY**

## ALLOTTED DAY—MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN IRAQ

**Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance)** seconded by the hon. member for Châteauguay moved:

That, the first sitting day following a decision by the government to involve Canada in any military action to disarm Saddam Hussein, a motion, "That this House concur in the decision by the government regarding Canada's involvement in military action to disarm Saddam Hussein", shall be deemed moved and seconded at the call of Government Orders and that any dilatory or other motion, including motions during Routine Proceedings, with the exception of requests for unanimous consent, shall not be receivable by the Chair; and that, in relation to the motion to concur in the decision by the government, at fifteen minutes before the expiry of the time provided for government business on that day, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this Order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of said motion shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment."

*Supply*

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties and I think you would find there is unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That at the conclusion of today's opposition day debate all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put, a recorded division demanded and deferred until 3 p.m. on Tuesday, February 11, 2003.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is there unanimous consent to table the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** The House has heard the terms of the motion, is there unanimous consent to table the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. John Reynolds:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Bloc Québécois for agreeing to support this motion.

[*English*]

Let me begin with a little history about what might be called the Shawinigan-Iraqi two-step, where the dancer must wear flip-flops.

I want to go back to 1991 to remarks by the little sparrow from Shawinigan. On January 12, 1991, *The Toronto Star* quoted the opposition leader as saying:

Mulroney has committed our troops because he likes to be friends with George Bush...I don't want to be friends with George Bush.

Then on January 15 *The Globe and Mail* quoted him as saying:

The reality is that we're debating war tomorrow and our answer is no.

In *Hansard*, January 15, 1991, the sparrow turned dove when he said:

If faced with an act of war, we say on this side of the House that it is premature and that our troops should not be involved in a war at this moment and our troops should be called back if there is a war.

In that same *Hansard*, another statement he made was this one:

We say that this is not the time for war and there are other means such as sanctions, embargoes and diplomacy.

On January 23, 1991, the dove turned into a hawk and was quoted in *The Toronto Star* as saying:

In order to get Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait, you have to crush him.

When there was renewed tension in the gulf in 1998, the hawk turned eagle and was quoted in *The Vancouver Sun* of December 17, 1998, as saying:

We support the bombing. Saddam Hussein got what he should have expected to get.

From sparrow to dove to hawk to eagle, and back to a sparrow, is the evolution of the fine-feathered little bird from Shawinigan.

The motion today is as much about parliamentary reform as it is about whether action may be taken by Canada regarding Iraq. The motion calls for what Liberals demanded in 1991: that debates and votes on crucial issues take place in the people's Parliament.

I say to members opposite that real leaders are not afraid to make decisions and to put those decisions before the House for

consideration. Real leaders do not fear the possibility that some of those who sit behind them in the House might have differing views.

We should look to Great Britain and the mother of parliaments. A real leader there assured that house that before any final decision is taken, the matter will be debated and voted in that parliament. That is real leadership, and real leadership is what we are lacking on the other side of the House. The last time the present Prime Minister showed any concern for democracy, or consistency in expressing his concern, was when he was the opposition leader.

Questions of war should never be taken lightly. Nor should careless and ideological accusations be hurled at other national leaders. Nobody in the responsible international community lusts for war, as the New Democrats would say. The New Democrats can position themselves all they want with their diminished constituency, but to make such cruel statements and attribute such motives to the President of the United States or the Labour Party Prime Minister of Great Britain is simply wrong and reckless. To make such accusations is cheap political posturing whether it comes from those on the far left or from the remote reaches of the government's backbenches. Then again, vacuums are created when real leadership is lacking.

Real leaders do not stumble into war. They take a position and subject it to debate and a vote in the nation's supreme law making body, this Parliament. When tyrants, despots, mass murderers and brutal dictators like Saddam Hussein threaten world stability, responsible nations must brace for war. When individuals such as Saddam Hussein give support and succour to international terrorists or field their own teams of terrorists, responsible nations must brace for war.

The fundamental failure of the Liberal government is the Prime Minister's refusal to make clear whether Canada will participate in any possible action against Saddam Hussein. Canadians do not know if the Liberal government will participate only if the United Nations Security Council approves action or if the government will participate in concert with our allies, the United States, Great Britain, Australia and many others. Canadians deserve to know.

● (1100)

These are not easy or simple questions deserving easy or simple answers. They are very serious and should be debated fully in the people's Parliament and decided by a vote of all hon. members in the House.

Let me stress that such serious decisions should be accompanied by a debate and a vote in the House of Commons, but a motion to participate in any action in Iraq should be brought before the House by the government to enable a debate. In other words, real leadership should be demonstrated by the government and the way to demonstrate that is to support the motion that is before the House today.

### *Supply*

A take note debate is not a substitute because it does not allow for a vote. A take note debate is really a pat on the head for Liberal backbenchers. Tragically, the Prime Minister and the Liberal government avoid responsibilities of governing so it falls to the opposition to do the right thing with the motion today.

The purpose of the motion is to ensure that when a decision is made with regard to Iraq the matter will be brought before the House for a debate and a vote. Let me go back to January 17, 1991 to see what the current government House leader had to say about Canada's role in the gulf war.

First he criticized the government for not recalling the House sooner for debate on the actions Canada would take against Iraq following the invasion of Kuwait. Later in the same speech, he said he had a right, and his constituents had a right, to have a fundamental question posed and that all members had the right to speak to the question. The hypocrisy is breathtaking. The current government House leader does not want the debate today that he wanted 12 years ago. What made him change? Is it that Liberal arrogance getting into the government? In opposition he wanted the debate. He wanted a vote, but not today.

When he sat on this side, he demanded that every member of the House be given an opportunity to speak to and vote on the issue. So it falls to the official opposition, with the support of other opposition parties, to try to bring a little democracy to this place by giving hon. members the opportunity to speak to and vote on this issue.

On January 17, 1991 the current government House leader, the great defender of democracy, a standard bearer for political hypocrisy, argued that the government should have put a motion with a point blank question on the gulf war at that time. He said the question should have been, "do we or do we not as a country want to participate in these hostilities when they begin or if they do begin?" He argued that a very specific question be put to the House.

What we want today is what the government House leader wanted then. We want to vote today for a vote later when the government finally shows some leadership and makes a decision.

Just to make it clear that he was not the only one involved in that debate, the member for LaSalle—Émard, the former finance minister, was dancing as only he can dance and wringing his hands. He asked the Prime Minister for assurances that our safety here at home would not be jeopardized.

We wonder where the great parliamentary reformer is today and what he will do on this democratic question that he talks about across Canada, democracy in the House of Commons. Is he prepared to support the notion that Parliament is too important to be ignored by the Prime Minister?

I hope my friends in the media will ask him where he stands on the idea that Parliament should debate this important question and then have a vote on it. They might also ask him how it feels to be straddling a sharp political picket fence while standing on icy and shaky ground.

Back then when the government was in opposition, it was important to the Liberals that all Canadians know precisely where all parties and all individual members of Parliament stood. Today it is

important to the Liberals that Canadians do not know where they stand until all the lights are on and the corner in which they are hiding is illuminated.

The question must be asked, why was it good for Canada 12 years ago when the Liberals were in opposition but it is not good for Canada today? Why should the House have had a clear question put to it 12 years ago but should not have a clear question put today?

• (1105)

Canadians can only wonder because the Liberal government is not about to enlighten them. All the responsible nations in the international community must believe today that United Nations action is just and urgent. All the democratic governments of the international community have made certain that all sides in their various legislative assemblies have had an opportunity to express their opinions.

There is no reason for Canada to continue waffling, and ducking and dodging on whether we will support our allies. This is not what Canadians want or what they deserve. There is no reason other than the fear of the Prime Minister to deny the House its democratic right to a free and open debate followed by a vote. His fear, indecisiveness and contempt for Parliament and his own Liberal members does an injustice to both Parliament and to all of its members.

It would seem to most reasonable people that the clarity of UN resolution 1441 does not require an additional resolution. It may well be for other reasons, however, that an additional resolution will be necessary but that is mere housekeeping. The real question is whether the Liberal government is prepared to concede to Parliament its hard-won democratic right to debate and vote on questions of great national concern.

The next question is whether the House will concur in the decision by the government regarding Canada's involvement in military action to disarm Saddam Hussein. History does repeat.

In December 1990 the Liberals were demanding that Prime Minister Mulroney recall the House to debate Canada's participation in the Persian Gulf action. Their leader, the current Prime Minister, was explicit and said that the real question should be whether we should participate in the war, yes or no, and have a vote. He expressed admiration for the United States where politicians were given the chance to vote on almost exactly that same question. What a change. He wanted a vote in opposition, but as Prime Minister he does not trust his own backbench.

The prime minister back then, Brian Mulroney, had more respect for democracy and Parliament than does the current Prime Minister. Prime Minister Mulroney promised that if it came to war, he would go to the House of Commons, explain it and examine with hon. members certain alternatives for Canada.

The problem here is that Liberals under the Prime Minister, in or out of government, have never been open and honest with the Canadian people. They were not open and honest with Canadians in the 1991 conflict. They are not being open and honest with Canadians today about what actions, if any, will be taken by Canada.

Our international reputation is suffering because of the indecisiveness of the Liberals. Caution can be a virtue but indecisiveness is a weakness. We see, and Canadians recognize, that weak leaders and weak governments fear democracy. Never has a government in Canada feared Parliament like the Liberal government does.

Let me conclude with remarks made by my leader last October:

Canadians rightfully and sensibly do not seek war for war's sake. Canadians do not want to see war waged on the basis of propaganda. Canadians do want to see Canada's national security interests and long held values in international diplomacy upheld. The position taken by the Canadian Alliance in its role as official opposition conforms to all three of these conditions.

Our motion seeks to compensate for the Liberal government's lack of resolve and refusal to be clear and straightforward with Canadians. I would urge all members of the House to give our motion thoughtful consideration. It is intended to do what the Liberals demanded in 1991, that is, to allow Canadians to speak to this issue through their representatives in their Parliament. It simply states that when the government commits our troops, a debate will be held in Parliament and members will be called upon to either support or not support the government's decision. This is what democracy is all about.

The government has talked in its throne speech about openness, democracy and the modernization of Parliament. Certainly there is not one Canadian outside the House that does not think that their members of Parliament should be voting on whether this country goes to war. I would urge all those Liberals, and the minister who I understand is going to speak in this debate, to assure the House today that they will support this motion and make sure that Canadians will have a better respect for democracy than what they are getting so far.

• (1110)

I am sure the former finance minister, who has been making speeches on democracy all across Canada, telling everyone that when he is the prime minister there will be more democracy in the House, will be talking to his people. When he was in opposition, like the Prime Minister, he demanded a vote on whether or not we went to war. If his people support this motion with the opposition, it will pass.

Hopefully it will not come to that. I hope that next Tuesday at 3:00, the 301 members of this House will vote for democracy and make sure there is a vote before Canada goes to war.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois supports this motion because we have been calling for a vote in this House right from the start.

I would just like to ask the hon. member the following question. Is it not indicative of a considerable democratic deficit that the opposition parties are the ones obliged to make such a request in order to have their right to vote respected?

When we were elected, we all said we would represent our constituents here. In the opinion of my colleague who has moved this motion, is it not somewhat of a denial of democracy that the government is not the one taking the first step, on its own initiative,

### *Supply*

and calling upon the members of this House to vote on a matter of such complexity?

We can see that this situation is terribly worrying to everyone in Quebec and in Canada. The vast majority of men and women are following it very closely and are highly critical of the American position.

In the end, would not the Canadian government deserve to be faulted for not being the one to initiate such a vote?

• (1115)

[*English*]

**Mr. John Reynolds:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is absolutely right. The government has been asked this question. The government House leader has been standing up day after day quoting all the wars we did not have a vote on, but there has been a vote in this country on all the major wars. This is a major war we are talking about, if it happens.

It is hypocrisy while in opposition to demand votes on this same issue and even in the same area. The government House leader and the Prime Minister, when in opposition, demanded that the Mulroney government have votes and they were given a vote.

The former minister of finance when travelling the country since he was fired or quit cabinet, whatever the story is, to run for his leadership bid to become prime minister, has been talking about democratic deficits in Parliament. He has been saying that even private members' business should have votes, on which we agree with him. In fact most of the democratic deficit he talks about comes right out of our books that we gave to Parliament on the changes we think should take place.

We want to know where he is going to be on this issue. We know from other votes we have held in the House, like the election of chairs of committees, that if his group decides to support something, it usually means the vote will pass. I am sure if he wants to be prime minister he will show Canadians right now the leadership he will bring by saying, "Yes, my members will vote to have a vote". I find it astounding that the government would not allow a vote.

I find it outstanding that the government would not believe that also, but maybe I will give the Minister of Foreign Affairs a standing ovation if, during his speech, he says that he will make sure that we have a vote before Canada goes to war. I am hoping he will say that so we can stand up and give him that ovation, but I am concerned that I do not see him waving at me, smiling and saying he will do it.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is any secret that there are very few issues on which my party agrees with the Alliance's position on major issues of the day and we certainly do not agree with its eagerness to support George Bush, uncritically, in the matter of an attack on Iraq.

*Supply*

However the Alliance should be commended for bringing forward an issue on which, not only do opposition members absolutely agree but a great many members on the government side support as well, and that is the necessity for all parliamentarians to vote on the issue of military involvement in any possible attack on Iraq.

Unlike the current Prime Minister, foreign affairs minister and most frontbenchers, apparently many backbench Liberals continue to support the position that the Liberal official opposition took 12 years ago which was that it was unthinkable for there not to be a vote.

I have two brief questions for the member. One question concerns the decision to seek a vote only on the first sitting day of Parliament. This could imply a delay of weeks or months before any such opportunity would arise. I mean if the House had gone into recess officially a sitting day would mean that. I am sure that is not the intention of the Alliance. I hope the member will address that question.

Second, it seems like a very after the fact way to have parliamentarians officially express their view on any decision by Canada to engage in military action in Iraq. Should we not be seeking an opportunity to have a vote on the final decision informing the government and not an after the fact rubber stamp one way or another?

**Mr. John Reynolds:** Mr. Speaker, in reply to the former leader of the New Democratic Party, yes, we do not agree on many things but we both agree on democracy and that there should be votes on major issues in the House.

I do not mind saying that I think George Bush is a good president, unlike the NDP who do not like him at all. My party also fully supports the resolution of the United Nations.

The motion does say on “the first sitting day”. However, after discussions with our colleagues from the Bloc Quebecois, they will be moving an amendment, with our permission, to replace the words “first sitting day” with “the first day”. This would give the Speaker time to recall the House if the House were not sitting.

I think the Bloc position, which is probably the exact opposite to ours and opposite to how we might vote in the House, is a good example of how all of us together believe in democracy and believe in having a vote in the House. We will work together to make sure we get that.

With regard to the fact that it might be after the fact and that the government should know our positions, we are having this debate today and we have had take note debates in which the government has had the opportunity to know the positions of all members of Parliament.

However, governments do have the right to make decisions. They are the executive. When the government makes a decision, we think we have the right to have a vote on it.

Also, hypothetical motions cannot be moved in the House. If we were to try to move a hypothetical motion it would be ruled out of order by the Speaker. In talking to all of the parliamentary experts, such as the clerks and our people who are experts in this, the motion we have brought forward today is proper.

Governments do have a right to make decisions, we grant them that right. They were elected by the majority of Canadians. However governments are not doing a good job if they do not allow the House to have votes on the decisions they make.

• (1120)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête:** Mr. Speaker, as a follow-up to my first question, I would like to ask the hon. member if he does not believe, as I do, that this issue cannot wait to be decided by the electorate in another two or three years when it is time for a general election.

There are bills that could be debated. The parties are for or against, and the electorate decides in the end, at the end of the mandate, if the government deserves to be returned to office or if another party deserves to take its place.

However, on an issue such as war, which concerns the lives of men and women, of Canadians and Quebecers who would have to go to fight a war, on an issue where the very legitimacy of this war must also be decided, is it not terrible that the government is acting in such a way that the people's opinion, via their elected representatives, cannot be taken into consideration before the decision is made? This must be clearly stated, and it must be possible to bring public pressure when the decision is being made and not at the end of the mandate.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Reynolds:** Mr. Speaker, we were all elected by the public but the government was elected with a majority which gives it the right to make decisions, but it should be listening to Canadians.

The debate we are having in the House today and the take note debate we had last week allows Canadians to make up their minds. Colin Powell's statement on television yesterday allows people to know more of what is happening with the United States and its dealings with the United Nations.

I definitely have respect for the fact that the government was elected with a majority, has a majority in the House and has the right to make decisions for Canada, but I also feel very strongly that every member of the House has a right to speak on it and have a vote on it, and that is what this issue is about.

Whether we are in favour of going to war when the time comes to make that decision, we should all have a say in the House. If the opposition and enough Liberals were opposed to it and it were defeated then so would the government be defeated.

If the member is wondering how quick we could be in an election, this would be a matter of confidence in the government making a major decision. This is where it takes the courage of a leader to tell us what needs to be done and for his members to support that and vote for it. If they do not, then he has a problem.

*Supply*

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Durham.

The debate today provides us with another opportunity to consider our country's approach to the current crisis in Iraq. I am looking forward to the debate, which will doubtless ensue in the way the previous debates have done, and I think, as the House leader of the official opposition rightly pointed out in his recent comments, has enabled us in the House to debate these issues, to discuss them and to enable the Canadian public to have a better understanding of the very issues that are before us today.

The contributions made by parliamentarians on this issue have been substantial. The government has profited greatly from the discussions in the House, in the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, where I was this morning, and in conversations we have all had in recent weeks with individual members.

Today I would like to share with the House the latest development of our country's position following my meeting with Secretary Powell in Washington last week and his report yesterday to the Security Council.

The contribution I can make to this debate, I believe, is to frame our discussion today by touching on some of the substantive issues before us.

In the past few weeks diplomatic efforts, including those of the government, have been intensifying as the international community focuses on the essential issue: the need for Iraq to meet its international obligations by disarming.

Our objective is the complete elimination of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations, including Security Council resolution 1441.

There is no doubt for us that the UN remains the best way to pursue this goal. We will continue to work with our friends and allies to pursue diplomatic efforts in that direction. The government of Iraq must understand the clear message being sent by the international community. The only way for this crisis to be resolved peacefully is for Iraq's full, active and unconditional co-operation with the weapons inspection process. The choice is clearly up to Iraq.

As I indicated to the House last week, the question we have to collectively address here is how we can have Iraq disarm consistent with resolution 1441, and that remains very much still today before the Security Council. I believe there is a need for the international community to speak with one voice at this critical time through the Security Council.

We saw last week that eight member states of the European Union came together to declare their support for strong transatlantic relations and for unity on the question of Iraq. They stated:

The solidarity, cohesion and determination of the international community are our best hope of achieving this [Iraq's disarmament] peacefully. Our strength lies in unity.

Their unwavering support for resolution 1441 and the Security Council echoes Canada's efforts over the past few months.

We also place great weight on the importance of relations across the Atlantic and a strong and unified position on Iraq at this time.

History shows that when Europe and North America work together we can respond to even the most difficult challenges, including those we face today, whether that is the campaign against terrorism or the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Unfortunately, the current reality is that Iraq continues to avoid full compliance with resolution 1441. Dr. Blix made it clear last week in his update to the Security Council that more active co-operation was required by Iraq. Secretary Powell's report to the UN Security Council yesterday made it even more clear that Iraq was not yet fully complying with the inspections process.

Resolution 1441, operative paragraph 4, clearly stipulates:

—failure by Iraq at any time to comply with, and cooperate fully in the implementation of, this resolution shall constitute a further material breach of Iraq's obligations and will be reported to the Council for assessment....

At this point, time is running out for Iraq and the diplomatic pressure is intensifying.

The Prime Minister and I have been consulting with our allies and partners. During this week alone I have spoken by phone to my colleagues from Spain, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Turkey, Egypt and the European Union. Despite some differences of approach, I can tell the members of the House and assure them that all are agreed on the need for Saddam Hussein to disarm and the need to maintain the international pressure on him to do so. They all support the role of the United Nations in this process.

I indicated to my counterparts that the international community must remain united in maintaining diplomatic pressure on Iraq. I assure members that the government will remain resolutely engaged in this cause.

• (1125)

Parliament plays an important role in our management of this issue. The many debates and discussions that have been held in recent days are testament to the engagement of Parliament and the interest and concern of the Canadian people on this question.

Just this morning I had an excellent meeting regarding Iraq with the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The committee raised some very interesting points regarding the process we are in and I look forward today to hearing the views, as do all members of the government, from all sides of the House on this key international question.

[*Translation*]

As you know, I also had the opportunity to meet with Secretary of State Powell in Washington a week ago. The meeting went very well and I was able to reiterate Canada's position; that this issue must continue to be handled by the United Nations, and that the decisions made by our country would reflect the will of the international community as expressed at the Security Council.

Secretary of State Powell and the United States government understand and respect Canada's position. Friendship and alliance does not mean that two sovereign nations must adopt identical approaches in all cases. In the case of Iraq, we have the same objective, which is the complete and verifiable disarmament of Iraq.

*Supply*

Yesterday at the Security Council, Secretary of State Powell made a compelling presentation showing that Iraq is not complying with resolution 1441. He presented information that only lengthens the list of unanswered questions with regard to Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction.

I congratulate Mr. Powell and the U.S. government for bringing forward more information on this matter and presenting the international community with their point of view and the intelligence gathered by their country so that the UN Security Council can make a sound decision.

The next major step in this matter and in this process is the return of Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei to Iraq on February 8 in order to obtain greater cooperation from Iraq. They will submit their report to the Security Council on February 14.

I would like to underscore, once again, the excellent work done by the UN inspectors in this difficult undertaking. They have demonstrated the utmost professionalism in ensuring that Iraq has one last chance to comply. We maintain that if the chief inspectors are asking for more time to do their work, then they must be given more time.

We are proud of the support Canada has given to the inspections and the inspectors. However, additional time will serve no purpose if Iraq does not cooperate fully, actively and sincerely. The situation is very different than it was in the 1990s; Iraq's deception will no longer be tolerated.

• (1130)

[English]

There was much debate in the House last week, and there is much discussion now, on the possibility of a second resolution. In fact there is a need to state clearly and unequivocally once again to Iraq the will of the international community. Canada supports such an approach.

However, resolution 1441 has already made Iraq's obligations very clear and it enables us to address two very important questions. First, is Iraq in violation of its international obligations? The answer to this is becoming increasingly clear through the inspection process, through the report of Dr. Blix, and now through Secretary Powell's report yesterday. Iraq quite evidently is failing to comply fully, actively and openly with the inspections process.

That raises the second question of whether Iraq's failure to comply justifies the use of force at this time. Resolution 1441 provides for serious consequences in the case of Iraq's failure to comply. The nature of those consequences and the conditions when they would apply still remains to be determined however as the process of gathering information is underway.

Dr. Blix is returning to Iraq and will be meeting with Saddam Hussein next week. On February 14 he will report back again to the security council. If we are then told that Iraq continues to be in non-compliance a debate will ensue in the international community about the appropriate measures to take.

Clearly, we all want to avoid war and there is still a window for war to be avoided if Iraq chooses to change its approach and

cooperate fully. The timeline is a short one and the need to take a decision will not be deferred forever.

This has been the consistent position of the Canadian government and it has been the voice of Canada on the world stage throughout the Iraqi crisis to support this process. The international leaders we have spoken to tell us they all value our independent stance in this respect, supportive of an important multilateral approach to a multilateral issue.

We fully intend to ensure that Canada continues to advance a foreign policy reflecting Canadian values by sticking with the UN process and the international community in the weeks and months ahead.

• (1135)

**Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the minister's speech was interesting as it outlined the government's position, but it did not answer the question of the day. Will his government give us a vote when the government makes a decision whether to go to war or not?

**Hon. Bill Graham:** Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the hon. member's remarks and particularly his comments about the process of the engagement in the House.

I quite agree. I found the debate the other night more than constructive. I thought it was an excellent debate. It was an opportunity where we really engaged ourselves. There were differences of opinion, all of which were legitimate, as we tried to figure out what the best course was for our country to take. We understand and the Canadian public understands where we are going.

In that sense, I believe that the process of debating and considering this matter in the House has been a most constructive contribution to understanding the collective will of Canadian people about how to approach this problem.

I will defer to the House leader who will be speaking later in the debate about the procedural requirements and the procedural way in which we will be dealing with this issue.

Therefore, as I said at the beginning of my remarks, I hope to be able to bring some contribution to the debate by stating the substantive issues we have before us.

**Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I am certainly pleased to have this opportunity. The minister this morning came to our committee and said in his initial statement that Parliament had an important role in the Iraq solution. If Parliament does have an important role, the first thing we should be able to do is to vote on whether we participate or not.

When I was here in 1991 we were debating whether we would have a vote or not and the Liberal position then from his predecessor, Lloyd Axworthy, was very strong. Day after day, his predecessor demanded a vote in the House and he got one. The Conservatives gave a vote in the House, so we voted on our participation in that Iraq war.

When did the government change its policy? When did the foreign policy change on this? His predecessor was just the reverse of the present minister.



**Hon. Bill Graham:** Mr. Speaker, as I said in my response to the previous question, the House leader will be speaking to the specific issue on the resolution before the House today and will provide an answer to the hon. member in terms of the government's position.

However, I do not see any inconsistency in insisting that we have the debates in the House to fully clarify what our positions are to enable parties to put forward their positions and enable individual members to share their experience and to discuss these very important issues. We have had very full consideration of that.

The government has been consistent in its approach to these issues. We have consistently engaged the House in more discussions, more debates, and more ability to exchange views. We have tried to change the procedure to enable that and to be more productive. We have tried to ensure that time is allocated to the House to allow debates. That is the consistent policy of the government and we should recognize that.

[Translation]

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs gave a lovely speech. However, I believe he must answer one major question this morning. I have two caveats.

First, this war, which is very likely to occur under the current circumstances, again, has no legitimacy for a great many Canadians and Quebecers

The latest polls show that with UN support, 46% of people support a war. In Quebec, 49% of people oppose any war. This conflict has not acquired legitimacy.

The second caveat is that the government has not excluded military support for the United States without a second resolution.

My question is this: only once before the Liberals came to power in 1993 have troops been deployed abroad without a vote, and that was when Trudeau sent them to Lebanon. In every other case, there was a vote in the House. In a conflict that is not legitimate, when he could involve us without a second UN resolution, the minister—

• (1140)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the honourable member, but her time has expired. The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we can say that if war was declared today, it would not be legitimate. But it is necessary to follow the process. This is what we have always said, and not one party in this House thinks that war will be declared without the UN process being followed. That is what Colin Powell did yesterday.

He asked that Hans Blix return to Iraq to give that country a chance to respond. The UN chief inspector will return before the Security Council. That is the process. As in any war, if war is declared, and we all hope it can be averted, the process will have to be followed. The process continues. Let us not pass judgment on the legitimacy of the process until it is complete. Let us not be premature. The legitimacy is in the process of Mr. Blix. Let us wait until he returns before the Security Council.

## Supply

[English]

**Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to enter into this extremely important debate. I first want to thank the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast for bringing his motion forward today, which has helped further the debate in the House of Commons. I know we have had some initial debate, but it is such an important issue that I believe it needs to be more fully discussed.

With respect to the whole issue of resolution 1441 by the United Nations, clearly some of the current evidence tends to strongly support the position that there is a question of non-compliance by the state of Iraq to the intentions of the United Nations. I think the problem for a lot of international communities is the non-compliance somehow then translates into moving us directly into a confrontation involving war. I question whether that is a natural evolutionary process. I believe all sane-minded people would want to prevent conflict and war. I believe it is really more of an opportunity for Iraq to reconsider its position and for the international community to find ways to avoid this.

I know I speak for many of my constituents when I say that when we entered the 21st century we believed the cold war was over. We believed that we were entering into an unprecedented time of peace. Now we find ourselves a short three years later on the precipice of war. I know I speak for my constituents who have great consternation with that approach and believe there is a better way.

People have questioned time and time again whether we are really friends of the United States. I think we are its best friend, but I do not believe that friends always have to agree. Friends can have disagreements, which can be very constructive.

I am very concerned about the regime in the United States called the national doctrine, which was entered into by the president and accepted by Congress. It more or less lays out the U.S. foreign policy. It is interesting and I will read a few lines from the policy. It states:

In keeping with our heritage and principles... We seek instead to create a balance of power that favors humanfreedom: conditions in which all nations and all societies can choose for themselves the rewardsand challenges of political and economic liberty.

It goes on to state:

—the United States will use this moment of opportunity to extend the benefits of freedomacross the globe. We will actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, freemarkets, and free trade to every corner of the world.

It may sound like brave new worlds in the 21st century.

I harken back to another document that states:

America is destined for better deeds. It is our unparalleled glory that we have no reminiscences of battle fields, but in defence of humanity, of the oppressed of all nations, of the rights of conscience, the rights of personal enfranchisement.

We have no interest in the scenes of antiquity, only as lessons of avoidance of nearly all their examples. The expansive future is our arena, and for our history.

### Supply

This sounds very similar to the national doctrine. It is a statement by John O'Sullivan, back in 1839, who wrote of the whole concept of the manifest destiny of the United States. This has led to so many wars, both within the United States and within the western hemisphere, even in conflict with this country because the United States at one time had a presidential election based on the theory of fifty-four forty or fight. In other words, it was a conquest of Canada's sovereign area as well.

● (1145)

Because of that we are very concerned that the United States is prepared to enter into this in a unilateral framework. To support that, I go back to the national doctrine which says:

—identifying and destroying the threat before it reaches our borders...we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defence by acting preemptively...

This doctrine entitles the United States to attack any country in the world that it preconceives to be a threat to it. While I suppose some of us might argue that a country has a right to self-defence, it is a difficult and unusual concept of international diplomacy that we would sanction a doctrine which gives a country the right to attack any country. We are talking about country of Iraq. I think that most people—

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know that one of the rules of debate in the House is that of relevance. I recognize that the member is talking to the issue of what the foreign affairs minister referred to as the key international question. The motion today specifically is on the key Canadian parliamentary question, not on the issue of whether the U.S. should go to war without the sanctions of the UN, and all the doctrines about which the member is talking.

Could the member address the issue of should the House have the ability to vote on whether Canada goes to war?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** I do not know if at some point in time the hon. member for Durham will tie in his remarks to the motion at hand, but the message has been made to him and we all expect to hear his views on it.

**Mr. Alex Shepherd:** Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the opposition would want to interrupt a debate which is profound to the parliamentary governance issue. For members of Parliament to stand in this place and vote on something as profound as whether we go to war, surely we would want to have a debate on the merits of that. I am surprised at the member. He simply wants to say yes or no today to that issue. This seems to be part of the Alliance's basic foreign policy, that we should go to war based on a simple yes or no. It is not as simple as that. We are talking about something very profound.

What is the long term agenda? What happens when we make that decision, when we vote in the House and vote for confrontation? What is the long term result of that situation in the Middle East? What happens when a hundred thousand Iraqi citizens are killed? If we have this great build up of military might in the Middle East, there must be some other rogue regimes there with which we are not very happy. Where does it all end? It is not as simple as saying shall we vote on having a war today. We have to think of the long term consequences of that.

Quite frankly, the whole motion may well be hypothetical because we are not even at the stage of discussing whether Canada should enter this conflict. Maybe the House leader will put some of those arguments before us. I question whether the motion itself, because of its hypothetical nature, should be voted on in the House.

We are debating the motion before us today. I am happy to go back to looking at the consequences of the policy the United States has entered into, this so-called national doctrine. I hear people in this town in particular say that anybody who objects to that must be anti-American. I do not believe that for one moment. I think we are pro-American.

When the word conflict is added to the fear and the combination of religion and poverty in that part of the world, we enter into a significant period of aggression. The kinds of detriment that could be caused in this country and others are not from nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction. Rather, anyone who has a paint factory could create chemicals which could annihilate huge sections of populations wherever they may be.

I and my constituents are very concerned. I am before the House representing my constituents. I want to convey to the House the concerns of the people of Durham. Not only do they not want to go war, nobody ever wants to go war, but they also do not want to be committed to a long term aggression where their personal safety is also on the line and where the safety of our men and women in our armed forces is in jeopardy over an issue such as this.

The United States is not talking about disarming India. India and Pakistan are probably more of a threat to world peace than Iraq. We know North Korea has nuclear weapons and we are not talking about a war on North Korea. We are talking about war on Iraq. The issue with Iraq is these people are more of a threat to their own people than they are to the rest of the world, and that was my point.

We have to give the United Nations greater time to work and our responses to that have to be proportional to the threat of war.

● (1150)

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, clearly, the member and I may have differences of opinion on a number of issues. Unfortunately, the member did not clearly understand the reason why I brought up the point of order. I will try to be more precise in my question.

It was the belief of the gentleman, who is now the Prime Minister of Canada, when he was the leader of the opposition, it was the belief of the gentleman who is currently the House leader for Liberals, when he was a member of the opposition, and it is our belief that the House has a responsibility to bring the views, wishes, desires and the direction that we receive from our constituents along with our ability to think independently to this chamber and to vote on the question of whether Canada should go to war.

Therefore my question is not on the content of the member's speech. My question is precisely on the point: should the House be given the opportunity to have a vote on Canada going to war? A simple answer would suffice.

**Mr. Alex Shepherd:** Mr. Speaker, I am going to defer to my House leader. That may be thought of as a cop-out but the reality is that this debate is much more important than debating the semantics and workings of the House.

It is important to get our message across to the people of Canada and more important, to get their message into this place. We have been limited on the amount of time we have had to debate the whole issue. I have been frustrated and I am sure many other members have been also, to bring the issues of Canadians to the House. I am more concerned about that than I am about having a simple vote. We have to have more opportunity to vet this issue for the people of Canada.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I find it rather contradictory for a member to talk about his fellow citizens and then make such a statement. I cannot believe that your fellow citizens are different from my fellow citizens. They do not want us to merely debate the issue, they want us to vote. They want you to represent their views on whether or not to send soldiers to war and what we ought to do. There has to be a vote.

The motion by the Canadian Alliance is clear. Your government and you, as a government member, claim to be listening to your fellow citizens. Your fellow citizens are asking that you vote, not just debate.

•(1155)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Before giving the floor to the hon. member for Durham, I will remind the hon. member for Châteauguay that remarks must always be addressed to the Chair, not directly to other members.

The hon. member for Durham.

[*English*]

**Mr. Alex Shepherd:** Mr. Speaker, once again we could propose votes on just about anything in the House but the reality is we are not even close to making a decision about sending troops to anywhere for that matter. It is incumbent on us to debate the whole issue of whether we should be going down that road at all. I dispute the premise of the member's question because I believe it is premature to even be talking about a vote that would send Canadian troops anywhere.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate that the day will come when the people in the front row on the government side, because they are the government, will make a decision. They will decide either to go to war or to not go to war, or some other decision along those lines.

The motion says that after the government makes that decision every member in this Parliament should have the opportunity to concur in that decision through a vote. That is called democracy. Does the member believe in democracy, that we should concur in that decision with a vote?

**Mr. Alex Shepherd:** Mr. Speaker, certainly I believe in democracy. The recognition is that this is a majority government, that it has the support of the people generally, and the executive of that governing body is entitled to make decisions which affect the country.

### *Supply*

I am sure within their wisdom the time will come when they will possibly want to go back and consult with people through the House as well. But there are many different ways of consulting the people; there is the House but there are also other venues within the general population.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to tell my hon. colleagues that my speech will focus on the fundamental reasons for which I feel, particularly in relation to this conflict, parliamentarians must get to vote.

In this new millennium which, for many, started with the events of September 11, 2001, one superpower is dominating the world economically, culturally, militarily and politically, and this superpower is our neighbour and friend.

The international community, Canada, Quebec and each of us individually, must strenuously affirm that might does not make right. As imperfect as it may be, the United Nations is the seat of international law. This has been especially true and necessary since this war of civilizations, which we oppose with all our being, was announced.

But to oppose war is not enough. To many the twin towers tumbling down in New York revealed the existence of not only al-Qaeda, but also some twenty or more such international terrorist groups. We have seen them at work recently.

We know that the war against international terrorism will be long term, that it will involve combating inequality around the world, as well as hunger and injustices, and resolving the conflict in the Middle East. We know that war on international terrorism will not be won, be it in Iraq or elsewhere, even with 150,000 troops and sophisticated equipment. In the name of peace, such conflicts claim thousands of innocent lives in the civilian population, and at the same time they set the stage for extremists with a death wish.

To win the war, as was done in Afghanistan, is one thing. But those who take an interest in it know that this war may not be totally over. Fighting was recently reported. Numerous Taliban groups are fighting at the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

However, what the international community was seeking was to establish the conditions necessary for peace and democracy to be maintained in Afghanistan. This is a completely different story. The current situation in Afghanistan shows us that while the war may have been won, peace is far from restored, and the conditions for democracy are still far off.

Recent information submitted to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, indicates that currently it is not safe anywhere in Afghanistan, except in the city of Kabul. There are sections of that city too where soldiers are known to steal and rape. Outside of Kabul, warlords have resumed control. Sharia is the reigning law.

I have just been told that I should have indicated to the Chair that I will be sharing my time with the member for Saint-Jean.

*Supply*

So, it is not safe anywhere except in Kabul. Without security, there can be no freedom, rights, or justice. The case of the Chair of the Human Rights Committee, Sima Simar, is a good example. She is the subject of a Fatwa and has been reduced to almost complete inactivity. The Supreme Court, assigned the task of establishing tribunals throughout the region, is presided over by a judge who does not meet the requirements of the new constitution of Afghanistan. He had not been there for two years, but was closely linked to the disturbances in Afghanistan.

Far from preparing the conditions for democracy, and without the billions of dollars promised for reconstruction, Afghanistan is in a difficult situation. Why mention this again? Because on the eve of a war that promises to bring peace, democracy and security to Iraq, we must look at what has been done recently. War is a last resort that—since the adoption of the UN charter—can only be lawfully used under the aegis of the United Nations.

• (1200)

Furthermore, according to law, a pre-emptive war may only be started when there is an established and imminent threat.

I point all this out because this conflict has not acquired legitimacy, even with U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell's presentation, with all due respect to him. It has not been established that Saddam Hussein is a threat to world peace right now, or even that he is an urgent threat.

This lack of legitimacy is widespread in Europe and not one country there seems to have changed its position following yesterday's presentation. Time will tell, but the public may not be on the verge of changing their mind. In Europe, 82% of people are against a war, and in Canada, as I already said, 46% of people are opposed, even with a second UN resolution. In Quebec, 49% of people are against any war.

What about the way Muslims view this war? Like it or not, if Iraq did not sit atop the second largest oil reserve in the world, there probably would not be 150,000 soldiers heading for the region.

The fight against terrorism, which we cannot escape, absolutely must involve a broad coalition, including Arab and Muslim countries. An attack against Iraq under the current circumstances, without a new explicit decision from the United Nations and without providing proof, would only make the fight against terrorism extremely difficult. I am not referring to leaders of countries, but their citizens.

Because of this, we need more proof than we were shown yesterday to launch—with the support of the UN, but especially without its support—a full-blown war such as the one announced by the Pentagon with 3,000 bombs in 48 hours, before troops would enter Baghdad.

It is important to continue the inspections, which have been effective in the past. According to Charles-Philippe David, a frequent commentator in Quebec:

The surprise UN inspections seem to have produced tangible results. UNSCOM has destroyed more material used for weapons of mass destruction since 1991 than the entire coalition army did during the gulf war of 1991.

And I have more figures. We will also need to wait for the report of the chief inspectors. But I would like to recall Hans Blix's comments to the *New York Times*. I was much moved by these comments, which I will have to read in English:

• (1205)

[*English*]

Mr. Blix said he continued to endorse disarmament through peaceful means.

[*Translation*]

“Mr. Blix said he still supports disarmament through peaceful means.” This is my own loose translation. “I think that it would be terrible if this situation ended in military action, and I hope that disarmament continues through peaceful means”.

That is why Saddam Hussein must be pressured, and that is why inspections and peace must be given every opportunity to succeed. Even with a second resolution, this conflict's legitimacy will not be easily accepted by everyone, not by any means.

That is why, even if the Security Council votes for a second resolution ensuring international law, the Bloc Québécois is more than ever committed to holding a vote in the House where the parties could say if they thought that our participation in war should be supported because we considered that war legitimate. Each party, and perhaps each individual member, has the duty and the responsibility to represent the electorate and to vote on such an important question, which is related not only to a conflict but to the advancement of peace throughout the world.

In closing, pursuant to Standing Order 85, I move:

That the motion be amended by adding between the words “Hussein” and “a motion” the following:

“or, in the event the decision is made while the House stands adjourned, notwithstanding any Standing Order, the Speaker shall convene the House at the earliest opportunity.”.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The amendment is in order.

The hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Mercier for her speech, which clearly shows not only how concerned she is with this situation but also how well she grasps all the information and nuances surrounding it.

I would like to ask her a question that refers perhaps more to the motion per se on the necessity of a vote in the House on this matter. When we were campaigning for election, not one of us did so on the platform “We will go to the House and, if possible, avoid voting on any controversial questions, particularly anything to do with war”. It seems to me that all members, regardless of party allegiance, hoped that once they were elected they would be able to really speak out on essential matters.

I would like the hon. member for Mercier, history buff that she is, to give us a bit of the historical background on the votes that have been held in this House in connection with war situations.

I would like her to tell us if this has indeed always been a practice of the Liberal government since 1993, or whether there was not a different tradition in the past, one that merits reviving.

• (1210)

**Ms. Francine Lalonde:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques. His constituents have every reason to be proud of his work.

We did some research in my office, and a good thing. We found, and this was a pleasant surprise, that despite what the government is saying, since 1914 there has only been one time, under the Trudeau government, when troops were sent to take part in a conflict without a vote first being held. That is the only time when a vote was not held in the House on this issue.

There were various approaches, but in the case of World War I, it was during the throne speech, because of the timing. For the Korean War, a debate took place and there was a vote on government ways and means motions authorizing the measures to be taken regarding the war. No vote was taken regarding the Suez Canal conflict. A debate took place without a vote, but the issue was merely the sending of 11 people to monitor the truce.

So, as we can see, there have been debates and votes in the past. There were no debates and votes when the issue was merely the sending of a few people for peacekeeping purposes or similar reasons.

However, since 1993, troops have been sent abroad on several occasions, following take note debates, but not votes. The Prime Minister, who wants to leave a legacy and who surprised us somewhat with his proposal on party financing, should make his legacy to bring back the past practice of allowing members of Parliament to vote before troops are deployed to conflicts abroad.

[English]

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Bloc foreign affairs critic on her as usual very lucid and visionary presentation. In the process I also want to congratulate her for moving a very important amendment to the motion, because we know the current Liberal government is not one that values and respects the participation of parliamentarians in a timely way, even on an issue as serious as taking our nation into a war. Therefore we need to be sure that it does not use a procedural delay as a way of basically continuing to disregard parliamentarians.

I also want to congratulate the member on having spoken today and many times very eloquently on the inherent danger of pre-emptive military strikes. I think that is one of the great concerns about the U.S. continuing to signal that it is hell bent to launch an attack on Iraq no matter what.

I wonder if the member might take the opportunity to speak on this subject about what a slippery slope it is for the U.S. or any country to take it upon itself in total defiance of international law to engage in pre-emptive strikes. If the U.S. can do it, then who else can do it? If in this case—

• (1215)

**The Deputy Speaker:** I hesitate to rise, but I ask members to keep in mind that when members share their time it obviously leaves only five minutes for questions or comments.

### Supply

[Translation]

So, I am asking the hon. member for Mercier to be brief in her reply to the hon. member for Halifax.

**Ms. Francine Lalonde:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, who is now the foreign affairs critic. I greatly enjoyed working with her predecessor, but I am certain that the committee will benefit from her presence.

I will be brief. We stated our position very early when we learned of the plan for pre-emptive strikes, and we have not changed our position; on the contrary. Of course, international terrorism seems to be an opportunity for the United States to ignore the rule of law, but it cannot be ignored, because without it, as my hon. colleague mentioned, any country could take the law into its own hands. This takes us right back to the 19th century, when each country thought that it could fix its problems through war.

**Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, right off the bat, I want to draw the attention of people listening to the fact that, today, we are debating a votable motion.

The official opposition had to work some procedural magic to ensure a vote in the House of Commons, in the event of a decision to deploy troops. This is far from a sure thing right now. To force this debate, special procedures have to be resorted to. However, God knows that it is extremely important to have this debate, followed by a vote in the House of Commons before troops are deployed.

For example, I can mention the last conflict, in Afghanistan. During the NATO meeting here, in Ottawa, I received a call from an assistant to the Prime Minister telling us “The Prime Minister has just committed to war against Afghanistan, and there will be a take note debate when the House returns, next week”.

The decision had already been made. People were in the midst of preparations. Ships were preparing to leave. Troops were ready, at the ports, to be deployed to the theatre of operations, and the members of Parliament had not even had the opportunity to discuss it yet. Furthermore, we were not even given the opportunity to vote on this issue.

There are most certainly risks to Canadians and Quebecers deployed to these theatres of operations. What happened in Afghanistan? Four Canadians from PPCLI, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry—I always salute them when I say their name, because they are the ones who helped us in Saint-Jean in 1998, during the ice storm—were killed under friendly fire. We remember. They may have been based in Saint-Jean. It is always difficult to deploy people to a theatre of operations and it is always very risky.

I attended the commemorative ceremony in Edmonton. It was very difficult to see the intense sadness of the 25,000 people who filled the hockey arena. They mourned the loss of four of their friends and colleagues, whose guns and helmets were placed front and centre during the ceremony. Canadians and Quebecers who watched the ceremony on television certainly recognize the merit of these people who lost their life in a conflict that—I repeat—we had not even been called to vote on.

*Supply*

Yet, despite the many shifts and the fatigue of these soldiers, if they were deployed again tomorrow, with all the known risks, still they would go. I hope we will be able to vote to give our approval as members of Parliament.

There is no doubt that even after losing four men, if the members of the PPCLI were told that they were going back to a dangerous theatre of operations tomorrow, they would say “let’s go”. The Royal 22<sup>e</sup> would do the same, as well as the Royal Canadian Regiment in the Atlantic provinces. I know how dedicated these people are. I trained with the Royal 22<sup>e</sup> and I am very glad I did. I know the level of dedication and commitment of these soldiers. When they are ordered to deploy, they do not ask any questions; they just go.

A vote is all the more important now because of the issues at stake. There were issues at stake then as well. The Prime Minister and his cabinet made the decision on their own. Now there are other issues at stake in this new war. Will we join a coalition of volunteers? Will we respect the UN, the multilateral organization that is supposed to deal with these international conflicts?

If we decide to go to war without a UN resolution,—and that is the instrument that was put in place after the war for the exact purpose of settling this type of issue—if we decide to join the Americans in a coalition of volunteers outside the bounds of the UN, I believe that there would be imminent danger. I am talking here about a return to the law of the jungle.

What would prevent North Korea from attacking South Korea on the grounds that it poses a threat? What would prevent Pakistan from attacking India on the grounds that it poses a threat? If the Americans can do it with their friends, other countries could also decide that they can do it with their own friends.

• (1220)

There is the importance of the UN, and then there is the importance of allowing the inspectors to finish their job. Are they going to be allowed to do that before action is taken? Is there going to be a second UN resolution?

There are a lot of issues involved, we understand that. Talking about them is not enough. There must also be a vote on them. The members in this House, the parties in this House, must get some idea of all the issues I have listed, so that they can they say “Here is what our position is”.

There are, of course, take note debates, and our Liberal colleagues are constantly telling us that they do consult us. Consultations are, to our mind, all very well, take note debates are all very well. We take part in them but it is a bit frustrating, when the debate ends at midnight, to know that we will not have any say in the decision to be taken.

**An hon. member:** The decision is already made.

**Mr. Claude Bachand:** The decision is made, or will be, but without the vital input of the members of the House of Commons. In a Parliament, words, oration, discussion are not enough. There must also be a vote. When a candidate is appointed at a party nomination meeting, there is a vote. When we are here and there are major issues at stake, people expect us to be called upon to vote.

I see that time is flying and I would like to raise the question of the vitality of public opinion before I close. People listening to us know how important a vote in the House of Commons is. They think they elected us to vote. I can tell them that we often do. We vote on just about everything, from budgets to health, on all manner of things.

At this time an attempt is being made to prevent us from exercising our right to vote on something as important as the deployment of troops. The only thing protecting peace is public opinion. We have seen the polls, and my colleague has referred to them. We have referred to them regularly and they have been reported by the media. I think that the public is critical of participation in a war. They are fully aware that they themselves cannot turn up at the House of Commons and announce “I am opposed to this”. They have to influence their member of Parliament. There are people who want to influence us. Many of them let us know “Careful, don’t do that”. Of course we bring their concerns here, but if we are deprived of our fundamental right to vote, the whole exercise will, in my opinion, have been pointless.

In closing, if we vote on things such as a tax increase, which requires a Parliamentary vote, on additional money for health, on the Kyoto protocol, on new financing for political parties, if we are allowed to vote on these issues, we should be able to vote on the dangers to which we would be subjecting young Quebeckers and young Canadians. They stand to shed their blood for their country if they are sent to a dangerous theatre of operations.

We must give members the opportunity to vote on this issue. If we are allowed to vote on tax increases, it seems to me more important that we also be allowed to vote when Canadians and Quebeckers are asked to risk their lives.

I would like to say to the government that if it does not allow a vote, it will pay a price for ignoring members of the House of Commons and only paying attention to the cabinet. The government will say, “legally, it is our right”, but legitimately, we are here to represent the public. In our ridings, we probably all have soldiers who may be called up if troops are deployed. The government must understand that we want to have our say. It must also understand that we must be able to vote to decide on what is said.

If the government cannot respect this, it will have to pay the political price. The voters, who go to the polls every four years, will be the ones to denounce this government’s arrogance. They will know that they have the right to vote. They will definitely vote against those who prevented members of Parliament from voting on issues after debate, especially when it is important.

• (1225)

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Saint-Jean on his speech, and I know that, as defence critic, he is very aware of the state of the troops. I would like to ask him a question that seems relevant.

*Supply*

In the end, would not the soldiers who might have to go to the front in a military campaign to disarm Saddam Hussein—if that is what the government decides—want the support of the Government of Canada, the support of the House of Commons where their elected representatives sit, on this decision that will be made? Is it not important also for soldiers to know exactly what parliamentarians think about this issue? Would it not be important for them to have this information?

The Minister of Defence has said many different things. He even went to the United States and, each time he spoke, the message was not very clear. Would it not be better to send a clear message, to know exactly what the members representing the people think of this, so that the military can be informed?

**Mr. Claude Bachand:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question.

Indeed, I have never seen such fancy footwork. Personally, although I am not a French figure skating judge, I would certainly give a 10 to the national defence minister, the foreign affairs minister and the Prime Minister. They have been dancing around the possibility of having a vote, which is far from a sure thing. And what about their position? Will they choose to follow the United States, yes or no?

Any soldier about to be sent to the theatre of operations needs to know what is going on, as well as his or her family, who will also be greatly affected. You just have to see the families bid farewell to their loved ones to understand that this is a risky business.

Since the decision is only up to the Prime Minister or his caucus, those who do not have the chance to have the Prime Minister or a minister as their member of Parliament will soon realize that their elected representative has had no say in the matter. He or she might have had a say, but not the opportunity to vote on this issue, which is something very important for the legitimacy of the whole process.

Let me remind my colleague that the U.S. Congress and the House of Commons in Great Britain have always promised to have a vote. Tony Blair mentioned it again. There was a vote in Washington, and there might be another one because of the newest developments. Prime Minister Blair stated in the House that he would uphold tradition and ensure that the House of Commons holds a vote on such a fundamental issue.

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have a serious concern this morning and I would like to have the opinion of the hon. member for Saint-Jean.

I am concerned that 49% of Quebeckers say they are against sending soldiers to Iraq under any circumstance and that 38% of all Canadians say no. That is the same percentage the Liberals had in the last election.

Are all the members of this House not starting to be concerned about the polls on whether or not soldiers should be sent to Iraq?

• (1230)

**Mr. Claude Bachand:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

First, I disagree with those who say the government should operate on the basis of polls alone. However, we cannot ignore the

fact that a large portion of the public has serious reservations about a war in Iraq.

My colleague is right and I would go further by saying that, at the present time, public opinion is the last bastion of peace. Some are starting to feel the heat. President Bush is feeling the heat and the British Prime Minister is feeling the heat within his own party from people who say to be careful.

That is perhaps the fundamental notion, the lesson of this morning, and of this day. Maybe the Prime Minister of Canada is afraid of the members of his own party on this issue right now, which is probably why he is trying to prevent a vote in this House. As I said earlier, there will certainly be a political price to pay if he denies the members of this House a vote on such a fundamental issue.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have already had the opportunity to commend the official opposition for today's motion. I am also pleased about the amendment which was brought forward and which I also find very important.

[*English*]

Before I get into the substance of the motion that has been put before the House and the position of the New Democratic Party, we would be well advised to remind ourselves of the wise words of Lester Pearson in a similar debate many years ago, when he said:

The grim fact is that we prepare for war like precocious giants, and for peace like retarded pygmies.

Until recent years many Canadians would have thought that advice coming from Lester Pearson was not toward the Liberal Party of this place, but toward those who would be seen as warmongers and hawks in the international stage.

However, the reality is that there is alarming evidence that the government has been speaking out of both sides of its mouth on the whole question of what Canada's position is vis-à-vis a possible war against Iraq. It is critically important that we begin to come to grips with that very serious problem.

Rather than just reminding the Alliance opposition of this warning by Lester Pearson, it is members of that once proud Liberal Party who need to be taking very seriously his advice in that respect.

This morning's meeting in the foreign affairs committee was very disappointing. After having had brave words from the foreign affairs minister to the effect that Canada continues to speak with a strong consistent voice on its position with respect to any possible war against Iraq, he then proceeded to be inconsistent, contradictory and as always, erratic in responding to questions that were put to him on this very question.

We already know the line of the Prime Minister, the foreign affairs minister, and at least those in the frontbenches who have spoken out with respect to the question that is now before us in this opposition day motion, namely, the need to respect and ensure the participation of all parliamentarians in a vote in the House of Commons on what is surely one of the most serious decisions that any nation can make, that is, launching a war against another country.

### *Supply*

Why is it necessary for us to debate the question of whether a vote should be allowed? I guess there are two explanations. First, the position of the Liberal Party is that it is completely acceptable to take one position in opposition, which it did in the event of the gulf war and adamantly maintained that there needed to be a vote by all parliamentarians in the House of Commons, and to take a different position when in government.

Second, and in some ways this is even more worrisome because everybody knows that there is a record in the Liberal Party of speaking the voice of peace when in opposition, but sounding far too much like the voice of the hawks or the voice of war when in government.

However, far more serious than that, the reason we are having this debate is that the federal Liberal government has virtually abandoned the time honoured role, the hard earned role, and the highly respected role, of being among the peace builders, peace seekers and peacekeepers of this world. That goes to the very heart and soul of who we are as a nation.

Perhaps it is useful to refer to the facts about what parliamentary debate and votes took place in the House of Commons in the context of the 1991 gulf war.

● (1235)

I do not want to use all my time describing in detail what the various motions were and what the various votes were, but let it be said, let the record show and let the Liberal government of the day be reminded that between October 23, 1990, and late January of 1991 there in fact were three full debates in the House, not take note and let us have a little chat late at night debates, but real, thorough debates in the House of Commons. Eleven days were devoted to those debates. Seventy-one hours of debate took place. There were six votes on the very question of Canada's military participation in any gulf war.

How was it that the Liberals were so adamant in maintaining that this was not only the right of parliamentarians but absolutely the responsibility of the government of the day to ensure that all parliamentarians had an opportunity to exercise their responsibility?

Only the government can answer the question of how it was fine to take one position 12 years ago and to today take exactly the opposite position. Perhaps if it is reminded of what took place 12 years ago and of how heartbroken, I believe, more and more Canadians are about its abandonment of a responsible, independent foreign policy then perhaps it could be brought to its senses and recognize the simple justice involved, never mind the democratic requirements of ensuring that all parliamentarians have a voice.

Why are we so concerned about ensuring that there be a voice for parliamentarians? It is not just because we like to hear ourselves speak. It is not just because we think that in the casting of a vote somehow we 301 people have a special importance here. It is because we are here representing our constituents. We are here representing Canadians. What is becoming increasingly evident is that the government is not listening to the voices of Canadians with respect to the issue of any possible military engagement in the war on Iraq.

I know that when I get up and speak as the foreign affairs critic and when my colleagues get up and speak as New Democrats, as parliamentarians, about how desperately Canadians want their government to be a voice of peace, Liberal members stand and say, "What kind of naive talk is that?" or "What does that mean anyway?"

Let me say what that means. It does not just mean mouthing words about hoping that peace can be achieved. It is about being an advocate for peace. It is about being a relentless, resolute activist for peace. It is about Canada making the choice that it wants to be associated with those other governments around the world that are using every possible means to ensure that we do not end up in a war in Iraq. I do not think there is any evidence that this is what the government is doing.

In fact sometimes when the response from the foreign affairs minister sounds like it is a strong position advocating an independent foreign policy role, it is as if suddenly a ventriloquist comes along behind him and he then practically reverses the position right within the same sentence or right within the same discussion. That is not what people mean when they say they want Canada to be an advocate for peace.

Let me just say that it is very distressing, because we have had a concrete example. This is not some abstract difference of opinion going on here. This is the New Democratic Party speaking, we believe, for the increasing numbers of Canadians who want leadership on the international stage around the looming, threatening prospect of a war on Iraq, and we are not getting it.

● (1240)

This morning in the foreign affairs committee the minister actually dismissed as hypothetical questions as to what the position of Canada is, not what it would be in the future but what it is today, on the possibility that Hans Blix will say more time is needed and that there is indeed conclusive evidence of material breach by Iraq in the event that the U.S. declares it is going to war. He refused to answer those questions. The question was about the following. Are there not other steps? Are there not alternatives to war? Are there not things that Canada has in its current foreign policy as to what can be done rather than going directly to war? The foreign affairs minister basically said that it was a hypothetical question.

A second question was asked. If the recommendation of the Security Council is to have more time for the weapons inspections to continue and the U.S. unilaterally declares its war, what is Canada's position on that? The answer was basically that this was a hypothetical question.

If we follow that through to its logical conclusion, would Canada have any foreign policy on anything? This is about what Canada is saying today and going to do tomorrow in the event of certain things happening. That is what our foreign policy is.



It is appalling that the foreign affairs minister was not able to stand up and speak to the excellent, specific, concrete recommendations, for example, that came from an experienced, esteemed, expert panel on alternatives to war with Iraq when he was asked that question this morning. The panel tabled its report and sent it to the government on December 11. It has been widely circulated publicly. The minister did not make a single reference to the four very clear, concise, concrete recommendations on what Canada could and should be doing so that we do not find ourselves in the position of finding a material breach by Iraq, and this is quite possible, let me be clear about that, and a declaration of war. There are concrete measures that can be taken in the interim and the government is sitting there with excellent recommendations to that effect.

When we talk about this being a choice for Canada and therefore parliamentarians should have their say in what choice Canada makes, I know that the government dismisses this whole thing as if it is some kind of abstract question. I come from a riding where there is a very large number of military men and women whose lives are in the balance when a discussion like this happens. They have mothers, fathers, children, brothers, sisters and neighbours, all of whom care about them and all of whom want to know that the government is doing absolutely everything within its power to ensure that our loved ones are not sent off into harm's way when other options are available.

In addressing this issue, I had a very fine message earlier this week from a man in my own province whom I greatly admire and respect, Dr. Kell Antoft, who served Canada's military very proudly and who lost his brother in the second world war. Dr. Antoft continues to be an active veteran in this country, speaking to issues of war and peace.

● (1245)

I will just briefly quote from what he had to say in the event that the government fails to provide the leadership being sought by Canadians and the world:

Regardless of the urgency of attempts being made in the United Nations to preserve some semblance of peace...it seems increasingly clear that in the case of Iraq, the leadership of the United States will really only be satisfied with a military "solution". Canada will be under pressure to decide on its role in this unfolding human tragedy. Should we offer as a loyal ally to take part in the killing phase of a possible campaign, or should we rather seek a non-violent role in binding up the wounds that would inevitably be the principal legacy of such a war?

Dr. Antoft went on to say, "From a military point of view, we are clearly ill prepared" for a variety of reasons that we don't have time to debate at this moment "to take part in the fighting". He states:

Apart from the question of available manpower, and in spite of the prevailing mantra of our DND establishment that our soldiers need training only for combat, we have little of the heavy hardware demanded by modern warfare.

He went on to remind us that "It was in peacekeeping following", ironically, "earlier Middle East conflicts that Canada" began to accumulate "an enviable reputation" in the world.

Lamenting deeply, as do the majority of Canadians, in my view, he said that Canada has "tended to squander some of the goodwill earned by our forces". That is who has earned us the goodwill over the years, the forces who have behaved in a manner consistent with the commitment of Canadians to be peace builders and peace seekers and peacekeepers.

### *Supply*

Dr. Antoft's words of advice are extremely well founded. I hope the government will see fit to pay attention to that kind of advice, which is coming more and more from those who are desperate to see Canada play a role consistent with our proud tradition as peace builders and peace seekers.

Before I conclude, I want to comment again about the issue of our having a vote. It seems to me that the government is not listening to what Canadians are telling it. It is not even listening to the advice that has stood the test of time, for example, that which came from Lester Pearson.

● (1250)

I know that in these matters sometimes we are unduly partisan, but I want to say that if the government will not listen to the voices of members on this side, to expert panels or to the many other sources of advice that are forthcoming, then maybe it could at least begin to listen to the advice of Canada's former foreign affairs minister, Lloyd Axworthy, who has demonstrated not just in words but in deeds and action that Canada continues to have an important role to play among the mid-sized nations who genuinely understand the concept of human security and realize that there are no military solutions anymore and that Canada needs to become a no war country, one that says we will engage in fighting on every single front to bring about peace, reconciliation and reconstruction in the lives of people. In this case we are talking about the lives of Iraqis. That is who is lost in all of this.

I want to say again that we absolutely plead with and implore the government to understand that we cannot exercise our responsibility as parliamentarians, that the Liberals are not exercising their responsibility as a government if they do not allow the people of Canada to speak through their 301 elected parliamentarians to take a formal, public and on the record position of where each and every one of the government members stand and where the respective political parties stand on the issue of launching a war in Iraq.

Let me conclude by making it absolutely clear where the New Democratic Party stands. We stand with those who say no war, no way.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to make some comments and then ask a question.

When the U.S. declared war on bin Laden in Afghanistan, I quoted part of a speech made in 1991 by the current Prime Minister who was at the time the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons. He clearly stated that the Canadian government should never go to war under the aegis of the United States, only under the aegis of the United Nations. Never should we go to war under the aegis of another country.

Nowadays, the same man, the Leader of the Opposition at the time and currently the Prime Minister of Canada, is saying something completely different. When I first made my speech, he said that we were not talking about the same thing.

*Supply*

I would like to know what the member for Halifax thinks about the position the Prime Minister took when he was in the opposition and the one he is taking now. How could it have changed? He said one thing when he was in opposition and now that he is in office he is saying something completely different. I would like to find out what the member thinks about all of this.

• (1255)

[*English*]

**Hon. Art Eggleton (York Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the reference just now to the questions I asked this morning by the hon. member.

I should point out that everybody in the House would say that war should be a very last resort. That is the essence of the government's position which has been well enunciated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

I realize that there was not a lot of detail in answer to a hypothetical question. I certainly hope that the government is thoroughly thinking of these matters and these various scenarios. I can understand its only divulging so much publicly. I think the position of our government is the correct one at this point.

I would like to get to the motion before us which was moved by the Canadian Alliance House leader. I would like to ask the hon. member why it is that we cannot have, instead of the motion that is before us, what is already within the procedures of the House and that is a party can move non-confidence in the government if it does not like the government's decision?

The Alliance House leader is saying in his motion that the House should make some decision after the government has made its decision to confirm it. If it is a very serious matter, such as war, perhaps a confidence motion is the appropriate thing to be moving.

I know the hon. member cited the position of the Liberal Party when it was in opposition. At that time I was not there and I do not know all the rationale behind it. Maybe the Conservative government did the wrong thing in allowing the vote. I have looked into the history of this chamber and Parliament did not declare Canada's entry into World War II. This Parliament did not declare Canada's entry into Korea. In fact, there is a much stronger tradition of the executive branch, the cabinet, making those decisions.

The cabinet is in the best position to make those decisions. It has all the relevant information, including intelligence information that it cannot divulge publicly if it is getting into a conflict situation. It is appropriate for the government to make that kind of decision.

If the opposition does not like it, it can move a non-confidence motion. I see no point. Perhaps the hon. member could comment further on the need for this motion that has been put by the Canadian Alliance. There is a procedure already in place to deal with such matters.

**An hon. member:** And bring down the government.

**Hon. Art Eggleton:** If it is that serious maybe that is what should be moved.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough:** Mr. Speaker, I understand the member's point. I too am distressed at the idea that the motion only

contemplates a role for Parliament after the fact. I personally find that inadequate.

Perhaps this is the difficulty I have with the suggestion made by the Liberal member. It is not just about yes or no. It is also about the role. The most serious responsibility of opposition members is to try to move the government toward doing the progressive thing. It is not about confidence or non-confidence. I believe it is about using every possible means.

Someone wrote to me saying what they would like the government to do and that we need to do everything in our power to prevent war. We need to make it clear that we will put our hearts and souls into peacekeeping in a number of concrete practical ways.

It is the process of trying to get the government to respond to the many sources of good advice that it is hearing. The government has to be accountable for what it is doing or not doing. This is the role of the opposition.

The point is that we cannot just put this off into take note debates that are not at the core of the parliamentary process. We know this. What is becoming clearer unfortunately is it is the government's tactic for dealing with really urgent matters.

I will say again that we need not just one vote after the fact. We also need to have some motions put forward with genuine alternatives. Then we need to have some votes on where members actually stand. We need to keep trying to move the government toward being that proactive peace seeker which not just Canadians but the world counts on Canada to step up to the plate and actually be in the world today.

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** There are only two minutes left on this intervention. We have time for a one-minute question followed by a one-minute answer.

The hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

• (1300)

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question will be brief.

Since Mr. Powell's presentation yesterday, is there not room for a peace initiative by Canada? We could put forward the idea that, instead of going to war, we should develop a permanent or long term control and verification system in Iraq to ensure that there are no inappropriate activities going on in that country. This would allow us to avoid a war.

Should the Government of Canada not play a leadership role in this regard, which, unfortunately, is not the case right now?

[*English*]

**Ms. Alexa McDonough:** Mr. Speaker, I absolutely think Canada should be playing a leadership role.

They could do no better than follow the advice from that panel of experts on alternatives of war when it recommended that no Canadian participation should take place in or support for military action against Iraq without the clearest possible justification under international law. It went on to say that in particular Canada must reject an invasion of Iraq, unless and until there has been an express authorization of the use of force by the UN Security Council after it has determined that a bona fide and imminent threat exists to international peace and security that cannot be resolved or contained in any way other than through the use of force.

Yesterday's presentation by the U.S. to try to justify Bush's war that he is hell-bent to conduct absolutely does not meet any of those criteria. That is why it is so unacceptable that the government is not willing to commit itself to the course of action recommended as an alternative to war.

**Mr. Loyola Hearn:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

There have been consultations among parties and I believe you would find unanimous consent for the right hon. member for Calgary Centre and the member for Cumberland—Colchester to divide their 20-minute speaking time into two parts as they may determine.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the House give its consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[*Translation*]

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise in the House to support this positive motion brought forward by my colleague, the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast. We will also support the amendment proposed by the Bloc Québécois.

I will be sharing my time with the member for Cumberland—Colchester.

Today's debate on having a vote in the House of Commons before any military intervention in Iraq is welcome. However, I find it sad that we had to wait for an opposition day to have an opportunity to debate this issue.

[*English*]

It should be clear that the motion does not call for a vote now on the involvement of Canada but rather a vote as soon as the government has taken a decision. No one is rushing the government. The issue is, will the government be allowed to push Parliament out of the way?

For weeks now, all opposition parties have been demanding a vote prior to any military action, but these reasonable requests have fallen on deaf ears. The relevant precedents support the practice of Parliament voting on questions of war. The government can hide behind exceptions, but those exceptions are clearly not the rule.

What is more to the point is that public attitudes have changed profoundly since 1911, since 1939 and since 1950. For any minister who missed the 1960s, the whole debate about Vietnam reflected a fundamental change in the determination of citizens in democracies to be heard on questions of war and peace.

### *Supply*

[*Translation*]

Yesterday, in my office, I had a visit from a young student from the Outaouais who circulated a petition that was signed by 3,000 students from the region. The petition will be presented by the member for Gatineau later this session. This shows that young people are deeply committed to issues dealing with war and peace.

[*English*]

Citizens today are more educated. They are more exacting and more determined to shape the events that shape their lives. Just as ministers can no longer get away with slipping off to some wealthy contributor's chalet, governments cannot get away with slipping off to war.

Parliament took clear account of those new public attitudes during the gulf war, which is the one engagement that most precisely parallels what faces Canada and the world today. This whole Parliament, every party agreed to precisely the right to vote that is being proposed here today.

In 1993 the Liberal government broke that consensus and brought in a new practice that denied Parliament the right to vote on military engagements, a vote that Parliament had exercised as recently as 1991. I point out to Liberal members opposite that that reversal on democracy was not in the Liberal Party red book of 1993. When it sought the support of citizens in the 1993 election, the Liberal Party did not campaign on denying Parliament the right to vote on these matters. On the contrary, the position of record of the Liberal Party in the 1993 election was the position it took in Parliament on the gulf war when the Liberal Party asked for precisely what is proposed in the motion today.

My point is not simply that the motion reflects exactly the position the Liberal Party asked for in 1991. It represents the position the Liberal Party stood for in the 1993 election when it won its mandate. Liberal members who might be pressured to oppose the motion would break faith with both what the public wants today and with what the Liberal Party stood for when it won its mandate in 1993.

● (1305)

[*Translation*]

The precedent clearly exists, the government's commitment is clear, and all that is missing is the willingness of members opposite to ensure that this House has the opportunity to do something concrete by voting on this issue.

[*English*]

The debate today is not about the government indulging Parliament. The government needs the authority of a vote by Parliament. Deliberately putting Canadian lives at risk is not a trivial matter. By definition, it is a decision a thousand times more grave than the ordinary day to day decisions of governments.

*Supply*

If the educated, informed, engaged, modern citizens of Canada are going to support a military action which could cost lives and which could have literally untold consequences, then those citizens must be brought into the decision. Canadians are reasonable if they are treated reasonably. They are capable of judging a case if they are allowed to hear that case. They would be far more likely to support a decision by the government if that decision were openly arrived at with the votes in Parliament that Canadians expect on matters of life and of death.

The Canadian public is deeply divided on the issue of war in Iraq. Public instincts in Canada are against decisions which the government refuses to put to a vote.

If any war goes wrong, if there are Canadian casualties, if bad judgment precipitates the collapse of stable regimes in Jordan, Egypt, or elsewhere in the Middle East; or if it precipitates the outbreak of violence in Indonesia, Africa, south Asia, Europe, or in the former Soviet Union; if the coalition against terrorism is shattered, the Canadian government is going to need Canadian public opinion. It is going to need legitimacy. It is going to need authority. A free and honest vote on any dangerous course of action is the best way to assure that legitimacy. To proceed without it would put at grave risk the government's ability to govern should, God forbid, things go badly wrong.

That authority is essential also in the wider world. In the short term, in the excruciating but relatively easy days of preparing for war, our potential allies want other governments on side, but as the going gets tough, they will want other populations on side. They will want to know that the Prime Minister speaks for more than his family and his friends. If Parliament is shut out and if the people are shut out when the basic decision is taken, Canadians will have no sense that any decision taken by the government on war or peace is their decision.

As times get tougher, they will turn away from a government which turned away from them. In that sense, the issue is not about democracy now. The issue is about authority later. The motion provides the simplest way to begin to build that authority.

● (1310)

[*Translation*]

In conclusion, I want to tell the government members that this motion is not, in any way, a non-confidence vote against the government. On the contrary, it is a vote for strong parliamentary democracy.

[*English*]

There is no possible way this can be considered a vote of non-confidence in the government. Votes of non-confidence bring the government to a halt. The motion explicitly contemplates that the government will stay in office, will continue to govern and will be free to take, as I quote the language "a decision...to involve Canada in any military action to disarm Saddam Hussein". All the motion asks is that the ministers take account of the votes of the members of the House of Commons.

The parliamentary democracy of Australia did take a different course this week. It voted on specific motions of non-confidence in the government. That could have been done here if we were

interested simply in playing politics. It was not done here. A different course was taken. A vote against the motion is a vote against Parliament and a vote against the right of the people to have their elected representatives decide the most critical issue that a nation will face.

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in 1994 the government introduced what we call take note debates. Since then the opposition has always asked that we should have a vote after each take note debate. Now it turns around and comes up with another motion which says that the day after the Government of Canada decides to send its troops we must come back and vote if it was a good or bad idea.

What the hon. member is saying is that the day after the war starts, we should come here to vote. If we say no, we do not want the war and we want the troops back from the Iraqi theatre, the Prime Minister would have to phone President George Bush and say that our Parliament voted against it so we have to bring our troops back. Is that what the hon. member expects us to do?

**Right Hon. Joe Clark:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, we are proposing exactly what the member for Saint-Maurice, the then leader of the opposition and the present Prime Minister, proposed in 1991. The precedent is drawn precisely from what was proposed by the Liberal Party in opposition then.

The hon. member was elected 1993. I would be interested in knowing whether the hon. member, when he sought election in his constituency, went out and told his electorate that he intended to change the rules. The rules were that Parliament had a voice on questions of war and peace. Did he promise his electors that he would break those rules? Does he have any mandate to break those rules, or did his electors know that his Prime Minister, his leader, as leader of the opposition had embraced and urged the right of Parliament to vote?

That was the record of the Liberal Party. It had no mandate to break that practice when it took office in 1993. Yes, it brought in take note debates. Why? Not to hear from Parliament, but to deny Parliament the opportunity to have any real influence upon the decisions of the government. That is at the heart of the debate. That is why this motion asks precisely that the House of Commons today follow the practice recommended by the leader of the Liberal Party and the Liberal Party in 1991.

● (1315)

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his comments. I have a great interest in what is taking place in this particular situation, but I have a larger interest in ensuring that democracy prevails, particularly in this place.

I believe the intention of this motion is to see to it that that happens. I find it discouraging that when members from the Liberal government rise they are not speaking directly to the motion. They are avoiding it like the plague.

Could the member explain to me as to why they are avoiding even talking about the motion when they rise and speak to this issue?

**Right Hon. Joe Clark:** Mr. Speaker, that is a very important question. I did not draft this motion; it was drafted by others. It was drafted very specifically to ensure that the principle would be respected, that Parliament would have the right to vote once a decision had been taken by the government. It was designed to maintain the tradition that had been established during the 1991 gulf war.

My only guess would be that the reason the Liberal Party members are not addressing that issue is that they know they have no mandate to break that tradition. They know that the people who voted for them in 1993 assumed that they would continue to defend the right of Parliament to vote on these issues, which their own leader had argued for so strongly in 1991. I remember how strongly he argued for it.

It is important for members of the Liberal Party to know that those of us in opposition will be making sure that their own constituents understand how they have voted against the mandate that they received when they were elected.

The simple fact is that they do not want to talk about it because they broke their word. I would urge them to go back to the position which helped them win the election in 1993, the position of saying that Parliament should have a right to vote on these issues.

**Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to the hon. member for Wild Rose who said that government members are avoiding the question like the plague.

Mr. Speaker, you and I will remember back in 1990 when the Liberals did not avoid the question. They were very adamant. In fact the foreign affairs minister's predecessor, Lloyd Axworthy, a prominent Liberal, stated at that time:

...to deny the opportunity for this Parliament to be heard or to represent the Canadian people, to have the question posed, is a dereliction of duty by the government.

That is what the Liberals were saying then when they did not avoid the argument that they are avoiding today.

This whole issue is about contradictions. It is about the right of Parliament to be respected and heard. In 1990 before the first Iraq war Parliament was heard. There was a vote and we did have an opportunity to stand up. No issue is more important than the one we are talking about. I go back to Lloyd Axworthy again, who asked on October 23, 1990:

...can we get assurances from the minister...to have Parliament consulted before any final decisions are made as to these plans relating to our forces in the gulf area?

That question could be asked again today and probably is being asked by Lloyd Axworthy because he is one Liberal who has not changed the rules or has diametrically gone in the opposite direction.

This is a very important issue that we are talking about. It is about our ability to represent our constituents, as the Liberals once very adequately and eloquently defended but have given up on that principle. They have changed the rules altogether.

After the Conservatives agreed to have a vote, the then leader of the opposition, and now the Prime Minister, still complained that it had not occurred earlier. He said:

### *Supply*

...we are being called upon to vote on a resolution... We on this side of the House believe that this resolution should have been brought to a vote before January 15, as was done in the U.S. Congress.

He was not happy with the time of the vote, but at least he got one. The same Prime Minister is now saying no vote for this Parliament. A vote then, but no vote now.

We can go on to the current House leader who now says no vote. On January 17, 1991, he stated:

...I think I had a right and my constituents had a right to have that fundamental question posed and to have all of us speak on the question that should have been before Parliament.

What happened to that man? Now he is saying no vote. We have the current Liberal House leader saying no vote. The Prime Minister says no vote. The former Liberal foreign affairs minister says no vote. It is pretty much unanimous now that there will be no vote, but at that time they did demand a vote. Now none of them will support Parliament having a vote.

This morning in the foreign affairs committee the Minister of Foreign Affairs, a man for whom I have great respect, came in and said there is a very important role for Parliament in this debate about Iraq. What is the role if we cannot vote? Then he said he did not think the committee should hear witnesses from the United States or Iraq on this issue, which was a motion I was going to present later on in the committee meeting.

I ask again, if Parliament is supposed to have an important role and we cannot vote, we cannot hear witnesses, and we cannot participate, what is the important role for Canada? I was very disappointed in the way that happened.

We do have an important role. We are being muzzled and denied the right to speak. We are being denied the right to vote. We are being denied the right to hear witnesses in committees. These are important issues.

If the government changes its mind and allows us to vote on this issue, I may be asked to vote on whether we send Canadians to another country to attack another people. I want to know as much as possible about that issue before I make that decision. I want to hear from the parties involved. I want to get every piece of information I can, but the government for some reason says no, we should not know this. We should not have this information. We should just go by what other people tell us and that we should trust the people in the government who are here to help us.

The fact of the matter is we have been denied the access to information. We have been denied opportunities to hear from witnesses who are very much involved. I know there was another motion that was contemplated in our committee this morning, which was to have a vote. That discussion was adjourned and the vote was gone.

The whole strategy here is to keep everyone quiet, not to listen to anyone, and not to let anyone vote or do anything. Then the government turns around and says Parliament has a very important role to play. If we cannot vote and cannot hear witnesses, what is that role?

## Supply

• (1320)

**Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is important to note the reasoning on the part of the foreign affairs minister in this morning's committee meeting. I want to query the member about his lack of understanding.

The minister made clear that his concern about providing a venue at this time for Iraqi officials would distract them from the onus that is heavily upon them to be working with the people in the country right now looking for weapons and that it is their job to be doing just that. Their venue is the United Nations. That is exactly where the Iraqis are to focus. To create a whole series of discussions in parliaments around the world, from our perspective, would do nothing to achieve peace and would provide further obfuscation.

I want to ask the hon. member: what is it about what has been said to date by the Iraqi officials and what happened regarding the way they have approached this, namely, failing to come forward and meeting the onus set by resolution 1441, does he not understand. What does he need to hear again in a committee room in the House of Commons?

**Mr. Bill Casey:** Mr. Speaker, again, I do not understand that argument. I heard it this morning. I did not understand it then and I do not understand it now.

We, as a Canadian people, will be asked to attack another people. It is not only Saddam Hussein, who everybody agrees should be eliminated out of the picture, moved away, or taken away and the regime changed, or whatever. Nobody argues with that.

My argument is the Canadian people may attack a people who have never attacked us. If we are prepared to attack another people, it does not matter who it is, we should be prepared to listen to them. I do not understand why Canada will not listen to people. I just do not understand that change in foreign policy, that we will bomb but not listen. No matter who it is we should listen.

That came up at Concordia University. Everybody should be allowed to be heard and have the opportunity to be listened to in Canada. To say, "We are not going to listen to people, but we may attack them" is wrong.

As far as the venue of the United Nations goes, I support the United Nations 100%. The problem is the government will not say whether it supports the United Nations or not.

• (1325)

[Translation]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, according to my hon. colleague, are the Liberal members not taking a stance—as we have been unable, ever since the beginning of this debate, to find out if they are going to vote for or against the motion—because they have been jolted by our arguments so far and there might be differences of opinions within the Liberal majority, which would explain why no member of the government has been willing to set out its position?

They might have been jolted by the positions we have taken, because in the end members of four different political parties will possibly be voting differently on the advisability of sending troops.

However, these four parties and their members agree that the House should have the opportunity to vote. Would that explain what is going on here?

All members must have received letters from people telling them why we should not go to war and from others who believe we should support the United States. But these people all agree on one thing, "Keep in mind your duty as elected representatives, you are paid to do a job." When is the government going to let us vote on this issue?

[English]

**Mr. Bill Casey:** Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear that our position is that we are against a violent solution if there is a diplomatic one available. We are not at all satisfied that every effort has been made to find a diplomatic solution.

To answer the question, I asked that question this morning of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. I asked what his position was and how he would vote? He said the House leader would come into the House and give the position of the government. Here is what the government House leader said on January 17, 1991, and it would be interesting to see if he says the same thing today. He said then:

...I think I had a right and my constituents had a right to have that fundamental question posed and to have all of us speak on the question that should have been before Parliament.

I hope he comes in the House and says the same thing now, and I hope the government votes in support of this motion, as we will.

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member and his party for bringing forward their position.

For some individuals the debate today is about Iraq and the fact that Iraq must be disarmed. Others believe the debate today has more to do with the United States and its role in achieving the things it would like to achieve.

Personally, and from another perspective, I think the debate is more about the United Nations and the relevance of the United Nations after almost a decade of failing to bring forward, in a meaningful way, the directives that it has given in the past.

However the motion today is more about the leadership of Canada and its role, but more specifically, it is about Parliament's role.

I would question the member as to why, when he was in opposition, our current Prime Minister would stand in debate so solidly and so strongly for a vote in Parliament and now, when he is in a position of power, he almost pushes away Parliament and is fearful of what members may bring forward in a vote.

Would the member care to comment on that?

**Mr. Bill Casey:** Mr. Speaker, if I could answer that question I could answer why he reversed his position on free trade and why he reversed his position on the GST. However I cannot answer any of those questions. All I know is what he said on January 22, 1991. He said:

We on this side of the House believe that this resolution should have been brought to a vote before January 15, as was done in the U.S. Congress.

He was complaining about the timing of the vote, not the fact that he did not have one because the Conservatives gave him a vote.

On the member's question about the UN, I believe that what we are doing here puts the UN at risk if we do not do the right thing. At that time Liberal Lloyd Axworthy said "If all of a sudden we are beginning to deploy troops...beyond the clear definition provided by the UN, then we may also be in danger of undermining the opportunity of the UN to act", and we must comply with the United Nations on this thing.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

First, I would like to thank my colleagues in the Canadian Alliance for making the debate today possible. We have before us a motion that asks that we concur in any decision by the government regarding Canada's involvement in military action. What we are doing is asking that we actually bring our involvement in a potential war to a vote in the House. That speaks to the persistence of the disintegration of democracy in the House.

I understand and I believe Canadians understand that the fact that we are actually discussing Canada's role does not mean the government will listen. However that does not diminish the fact that this debate should take place.

Unlike many members of the House, many of my constituents are directly affected by any decision to join the war against terrorism in Iraq.

As the home of Canadian Forces Base Petawawa, many of the young women and men who will be called upon in service to their country, should they be called upon to actually go to Iraq, are currently serving in Petawawa.

I know the shudder that moves through a military community whenever bad news is received. I remind the Minister of National Defence that it was under his watch when the two helicopter pilots died last summer in Labrador and it is for the spouses of the dead pilots that I speak today when I join with the families of our soldiers in urging the government to take caution in whatever action is taken.

We must remember that the debate about whether or not the government is properly funding the military boils down to the people in uniform who are expected to carry out the government's wishes. As the soldiers are called upon to make do with scarcer resources, it is the families who suffer as they wait for the uncertain news of whether their loved ones will be returned to them safely.

To put this debate in context, I will share with all members of the House a letter I received recently from a constituent about the prospect of war in Iraq and Canada's participation in that exercise. The letter reads:

Yesterday was bitterly cold in Pembroke.

Nonetheless, about 90 of your constituents turned out at the corner of Pembroke and MacKay streets (me included) to demonstrate against war with Iraq and in favour of peace.

I urge you to vote against any legislation or resolution promoting war with Iraq, either in conjunction with a UN resolution or with the U.S. and Britain alone. Saddam is a monster, no one could deny that, but there are many others just as bad.

And there are some whose actions pose a far greater threat to the west than Saddam.

One inevitable consequence of war in the Middle East would be the death of many non-combatants: women, children, the elderly, the disabled.

### *Supply*

Please use your vote in Parliament and your influence with your colleagues to prevent war and work for peace.

Sincerely, John Pepper.

I shall be thanking John for his correspondence sent on January 19, which urged me to vote against any legislation or resolution promoting war with Iraq. However I cannot tell him that we will be even voting on this.

Certain members of the government try to portray those of us in the official opposition in simplistic terms when it comes to a complex situation, when it comes to something like Middle East politics, when thoughtful observers know otherwise.

Supporting our allies any more than not supporting them is not something that we determine easily, so let us examine the facts. Saddam Hussein killed 200,000 Iraqi Kurds using high explosives and chemical weapons in the 1980s. This will be included in my letter to John Pepper.

● (1330)

After the 1991 gulf war Saddam Hussein killed 20,000 more Kurds to crush an internal intifada. He ordered the killing of 60,000 Shiites to pre-empt an uprising against Sunni rule. Saddam is responsible for the unnecessary deaths of his own constituents, including women, children, the elderly and the disabled.

The UN inspectors have found 16 undeclared, empty chemical warheads and 3,000 pages of documents regarding nuclear weapons technology.

On January 19 Hans Blix said that a lot of the documents concerned nuclear and some missiles. They had not been declared and should have been declared. He also said that the warheads should have been properly declared and in fact destroyed.

UNSCOM said that Hussein had 30,000 such warheads, plus 550 artillery shells filled with mustard gas, 400 biological weapons, 26,000 litres of anthrax, as well as botulism, VX nerve agent and sarin gas. These were supposed to be turned over and destroyed but have never been accounted for.

The onus is on Hussein to show compliance, not on the UN to find a smoking gun. When the gun is smoking it is too late.

On January 16 Dr. Blix stated:

We have found several cases where it is clear that Iraq has imported weapons related material in violation of the prohibitions of the Security Council.

Whether these items are related to weapons of mass destruction is a matter that still has to be determined. He also said that some of the illegal importation occurred as recently as 2002.

Both Donald Rumsfeld and Colin Powell have suggested that Iraqi leaders go into exile to avoid war. News reports in the Middle East say that Saudi Arabia and others have made overtures to Iraq about such a plan. Saddam insists that he will stay and fight to defend Baghdad despite this potential solution.

*Supply*

French President Chirac and German Chancellor Schroeder announced on January 22 that both countries would vote against any UN resolution for war against Iraq and that they would oppose any U.S. led invasion.

By coincidence, France and Russia, both veto bearing members of the UN Security Council, have made oil deals with Iraq that blatantly contravene UN resolutions. So has Syria, a known state sponsor of terrorism, an Iraqi ally and temporary member of the Security Council.

The UN meekly accepted the eviction of UN weapons inspectors in 1998. The oil for food program has not been affected by Hussein's outright belligerence. Flagrant violations have gone unpunished for years.

The UN failed to act in Rwanda, in East Timor and in Kosovo. Thousands upon thousands of civilians were massacred. The future of the UN is at risk if it fails to act in Iraq. UN authorization to confront Saddam is already in place. There was never an armistice to end the last gulf war, only a ceasefire.

Because of Iraq's continued violation of the ceasefire's disarmament resolution, the ceasefire no longer exists. Canada must work with our allies to disarm this rogue Iraqi regime. We must work with our allies to ensure that UN resolutions are enforced.

I thank John Pepper and all the constituents from the Ottawa Valley who have written to me and for taking time to communicate their concerns. The House is divided about war in Iraq and so is the Canadian public. At the end of the day a position has to be taken and hopefully voted for here.

● (1335)

When faced with the choice in taking Saddam at his word versus the safety and security of our citizens, trust that I together with my colleagues in the Canadian Alliance shall put Canadians first.

**Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully and worked hard to follow the thread of the hon. member's thought. However I got lost along the way.

What does the hon. member intend to tell Mr. Pepper who was one of 90 peace demonstrators? Could she clarify for me her and her party's position that because their sense of the United Nations potential is not up to their bar, they are advocating war and going ahead with a war against Iraq outside of the United Nations with allies. Is that going to be the content of the hon. member's letter to Mr. Pepper?

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, we are here today to advocate the right of all parliamentarians to vote on whether we will participate in a war and so we all have an opportunity to concur with the decision of Parliament to go ahead with the continued war on terrorism now in Iraq.

I quoted the letter in which I was responding to Mr. Pepper. However once again I emphasize that when faced with the choice of either siding with Saddam, the way the government is, or putting the safety and security of Canadians first, I will side with the people of Canada.

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I hope the hon. member is clear with John Pepper who made a very honourable stand on this issue.

The honourable thing for the opposition to do is to ask for a vote before we send the troops, not after. We cannot call back the troops when we start shooting. We cannot call back the troops when we start bombing. The vote has to take place before.

I hope, when the hon. member writes that letter to Mr. Pepper, she sends a copy of the motion which she proposes we support. I will not support this motion. If we are to have a vote, the vote has to be before, not after. Her party has a chance to change the motion now to have a vote tonight or tomorrow night or Tuesday next, before we send the troops, not after.

Will she make that change and come clean with Mr. Pepper? The honourable thing to do would be to change the motion.

● (1340)

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the member across the floor ask his own leader, the Prime Minister, whether he will provide us with the opportunity to vote before the troops go to war.

We know the decision to go to war is an executive decision but we want the basic, fundamental democracy of having the ability, as the elected representatives of Canada, to participate in vote on such an important issue as our country participating in a war.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate and thank the member for her speech. She has really hit the nail on the head.

What the parliamentary secretary, who is doing quite a bit of yelling all of a sudden, does not seem to understand is that Canadians expect the government to take the leadership role and show leadership. We understand that cabinet will receive information that most of us will not have in our possession, and understandably so for the sake of intelligence security and all that. I can understand that as do most people.

However what the member has pointed out loud and clear is once the decision is made by the cabinet, then it is time for it to convince the rest of us that its decision is correct and we should have a vote on that decision, not whether we call troops back. That man is way out to lunch. He does not understand the debate. That is the trouble with most of the government members. They do not seem to understand.

Take the leadership role, make a decision and convince me that the right decision has made on the basis of intelligence, then give me a vote on it. Is there anything wrong with that?

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, certainly the question that rings through my mind and the minds of Canadians across this great land is this. Will the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Foreign Affairs state absolutely that there is positively no chance that people have been retained to launch these missing materials in Iraq, the anthrax, the VX, the mustard gas, the nuclear technology, into North America or into any of our other traditional allies' homelands? Can the ministers guarantee that there is no chance they will be attacked?



*Supply*

• (1345)

**Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the next few weeks hold great uncertainty for our world. We could find ourselves at war, but with decisive action we might still achieve Iraqi disarmament by peaceful means.

War is a horrible thing. Let us avoid it if we can. However we cannot avoid war at all costs. If Iraq continues to challenge the will of the world, we must respond forcefully. The serious consequences of UN security resolution 1441 cannot be an effective threat without the understanding that we will follow up that threat with action. We are not at that point, but the Canadian people deserve to have this issue voted on in Parliament when we are. Today's motion is not a call to arms. It is a call for a democratic vote if military action in Iraq becomes a reality.

Any rational person does not want war if it can be avoided. The Canadian Alliance is very clear on this point. Just last week the leader of the official opposition stated in Parliament:

War is at worst horrific, and at best a terribly inadequate way of dealing with the problems of humanity.

For peaceful nations like ours, Iraq is a difficult problem. Hussein is a dishonourable tyrant. Yet this does not excuse us to act in kind. We must show honour in the face of evil. Unlike Iraq, Canada is a nation founded on justice and due process. So too are our allies, Great Britain and the United States. It is for this reason that these nations brought their cases to the UN Security Council.

I have had my doubts of the ability of United Nations to resolve these situations in the past. With all of its competing interests, the organization often acts too slowly or not at all. How the UN responds to this crisis will decide a great deal about how effective it is viewed in the future. Still, I recognize that the UN is founded upon the same principles as Canada: freedom, tolerance, inclusiveness, equality and due process of law. It is these principles that give us our strength. When the UN strongly defends these principles, it deserves our support.

Obviously after 11 years we are past the point of letting Iraq delay any longer, but if giving weapons inspectors a few more weeks might gain Iraqi compliance, I support that. Hans Blix makes his final report on February 14. We owe it to peace to wait to see if there is improvement at that time.

As leaders we also need to face the alternative. We must admit that Saddam Hussein might not comply. Iraq has wilfully and systematically undermined every term of the 1991 gulf ceasefire and every resolution it agreed to in that time since. It is a brutal regime, with little or no respect for international law or even those basic rights of its own citizenry.

These facts are not in dispute. The UN has previously issued at least 30 statements citing specific violations of the 16 binding Security Council resolutions put in place at the end of the gulf war. With the passage of resolution 1441, a strong framework for responding to the threat of the Iraqi regime was established. Yet it is his report on January 27, Chief Weapons Inspector Hans Blix stated the following:

Iraq appears not to have come to the genuine acceptance—not even today—of the disarmament which was demanded of it and which it needs to carry out to win the confidence of the world and to live in peace.

Yesterday Colin Powell confirmed to the UN what Blix stated a week earlier; Iraq is in material breach of 1441. Satellite imagery and intercepted radio transmissions paint a grim picture of Iraq. As one intercepted radio transmission between two Iraqi officers clearly demonstrates, “Remove the expression “nerve agents” wherever it comes up in the wireless instructions”. It is pretty hard to believe that this is anything except a wilful attempt to hide these dangerous and banned weapons. It is also hard to believe this pattern of lies will change.

This comes to the crux of the difference between the Canadian Alliance and the Liberals: We have to send clear signals.

• (1350)

The government's response to this crisis has been a miserable failure, playing one opposition party against another but saying nothing. That is not leadership. We need to send stronger signals that Iraq's continuing deceit will not be tolerated. Canadian non-action simply encourages non-compliance and more than anything else, this non-compliance risks war.

Without the buildup of U.S. forces in the region, one has to wonder whether Iraq would even pretend to co-operate. It should be remembered there was no end to the Kosovo genocide in the former Yugoslavia until NATO ground troops arrived in neighbouring Albania.

Even France, one of the most reluctant nations to go to war, is still preparing for that possibility. The *Telegraph* reported on February 4 that France sent an aircraft carrier, a nuclear submarine and other warships toward the gulf. The French defence minister stated, “French military forces will be ready to intervene in Iraq, should the decision be taken”. Our government has not even done that.

A strong response from all nations may have an effect on the situation in Iraq. Hans Blix has asked for more time, and I support giving it to him. However it must be made clear to Iraq that time is not unlimited.

Our government has done nothing. The only hope for a peaceful resolution is to send troops over there and to camp on Saddam's back door to show him that this threat is real. Our government has sat on the fence, a timid player at best. If all the other nations did that, we would have war.

We are being painted as warmongers, but nothing is further from the truth. We want peace. The way to achieve peace is to have the entire military force stare down Saddam Hussein's throat so he knows he has no choice but to disarm. That is how we will avoid a war.

Today is about a vote. Our party has put forward this motion. The wording is complicated, but in practice it is very simple. We are asking the House of Commons to promise to hold a vote if war becomes necessary to disarm Iraq. This is no different than what was asked for in 1991. We are waiting for more information to come to light. We are not voting on whether to send troops today. We believe that would be premature.

*S. O. 31*

We are only want to be assured that should the time come, the government will allow every member of Parliament to express his or her conscience. This has become necessary because the government refuses to lead on this issue. It fears to be caught in the tides of public opinion or in the heated discussions of its caucus chambers. This is not leadership. The government's political selfishness is embarrassing to our country and dangerous to world peace.

In 1991, when the Liberals were in opposition, they demanded a vote when troops were sent to the gulf war. They said that the Canadian people had the right to have their voices heard. What has changed?

If we truly believe in our values, we should stand up for them, at home and abroad, not blindly as a tool to start wars, not blindly as an excuse to avoid them, but simply and with conviction. Hopefully we will never need such a vote. Hopefully Iraq will co-operate, but we need to prepare for the alternative. We need to show leadership. We need to show the UN and our western allies that we also support the rule of law and that we value democracy and due process. We need to show Saddam Hussein that if he subverts these principles, it is at his peril.

The difference between us and the government is we want to have a peaceful solution and we can do that by having a strong military presence so Saddam Hussein takes this threat seriously. The government has at best sat on the fence and flopped back and forth and side to side. If all western allies had done that, Saddam Hussein would be laughing at us and would continue to build weapons of mass destruction.

I ask members to vote in favour of this motion so they can exercise their democratic right as their leader demanded in 1991.

• (1355)

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned that France had sent vessels to the area. I want him to know that we have many vessels in the area, one of them in the Arabian Sea.

Would he be good enough to check his facts and come back to us to correct his statement saying that we have no troops in the area. We have them in the area and we have a vessel in the Arabian Sea. For my colleague's information, geographically the Arabian Sea is very close to Iraq. If he does not know that, he knows it now.

**Mr. Gary Lunn:** Mr. Speaker, I am fully aware. In fact on Sunday I was there when the HMCS *Regina* sailed off. I have seen many ships leave from the harbour of greater Victoria. I have spoken to the men and women aboard ships going to the war in Afghanistan and patrolling the oil embargos.

We stand behind those men and women who are defending our country. The difference is that our country has waffled and flopped back and forth on taking a position. It has not been strong. It has not been out there saying that the way to disarm that man is to say that if he continues to subvert the process and make a mockery of it, we will be there with all of our force and might, whatever we have to offer, with our allies to ensure that the peaceful democratic world is not put at risk by that raging tyrant.

It is only through a strong military presence staring down the throat of Saddam Hussein will there be a possibility of having a peaceful resolution to this matter. That is the only thing that man could possibly listen to. The only reason Saddam Hussein has come as far as he has, that he has pretended to co-operate, is that the Americans have been staring down his throat and it is time we did the same.

**Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot agree with the contentions of the hon. member that the only way to solve a dilemma like Saddam Hussein and Iraq is to have him staring at the end of a gun. The incongruity is that the member quoted his leader and what his comments were initially with regard to war as an instrument of state craft.

My difficulty also extends to the comments that there has been no leadership on this side of the House. Support has been given by the government to bring the United States into the Security Council, to support the tenets and articles of resolution 1441. To stand firm in all regards on putting the pressure in a united, multilateral way on Saddam Hussein has been very much part and parcel of the initiatives taken by the government.

I am at a loss to determine just what leadership is according to the member's definition. Is it only to be at the end of a gun? Is it not to include all of the work that we have done with the United Nations for many decades?

**Mr. Gary Lunn:** Mr. Speaker, if the member thinks that she is going to sit across the table from Saddam Hussein and find a nice, peaceful resolution and believe it, after what he has done in the last 11 years, it is ridiculous. If that man is going to respond, and hopefully he does for the sake of world peace, it will only be from a real threat of military action against that country and nothing else.

For the member to suggest that her government can take credit for resolution 1441, the truth be known, we are not even thought of by the other nations. Our name never comes up with the major players. Canada is a very small bean because of the Prime Minister's inability to get involved with the other leaders. He has hurt the Canadian reputation so badly through his inaction, through his lack of leadership, that we are not even taken seriously. That really could hurt Canada's interests in the future.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[*Translation*]

**SHIRLEY L. THOMSON**

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to inform the House of the important contribution made by Shirley L. Thomson to Canada's arts community.

When she was named director of the Canada Council for the Arts on January 1, 1998, a position she held until last December, with distinction I might add, she brought with her with her already vast experience as director of the National Gallery of Canada for ten years, and director of the McCord Museum in Montreal in the early 1980s.

Ms. Thomson was also the first chair of the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies.

A champion of funding for arts and culture, Ms. Thomson has worked tirelessly to develop the arts in society.

The triple E formula is often mentioned in this House, with respect to the other place; we might describe Ms. Thomson as a triple E woman: she is erudite, elegant and eloquent.

On behalf of all artists in Canada, I want to thank her for everything she has done for us.

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[English]

#### MEMBER FOR LASALLE—ÉMARD

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the former finance minister's leadership campaign is a non-event. What it needs is a symbol, but what would work for the man who has everything except a fixed position? He has had more flip-flops than a catfish in a canoe. On democratic reform, Kyoto, election finance, you name it, the position seems to depend on the audience, not on any firmly held views. So I went looking for some ideas.

I said to the weather vane, "Any way the wind blows, you would be a good symbol". He said, "No way. I have a fixed position". I talked to the middle of the road and said, "How about you?" She said, "No. You know where I stand. Right in the middle". Then I ran into a chameleon. The chameleon said, "I could be a good symbol because when there is trouble, I am very hard to find and when I am under stress, I change to suit my nearest environment just to blend in".

There is my contribution to the former finance minister's leadership campaign, a new symbol: the chameleon. It is a great symbol. It could have been a dead skunk.

\* \* \*

#### FOOD FREEDOM DAY

**Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today is Food Freedom Day. Today Canadians have earned enough money to pay for their entire year's food supply. It takes just 37 days out of the whole year for the average Canadian to pay for his or her groceries.

In 1999 Canadians spent 10% of their personal disposable income on food. That compares to 13% in France, 15% in Germany and 33% in Mexico.

Farmers are earning just a fraction of the average food dollar. While Food Freedom Day is February 6, January 9 is the day on which we have paid for the farmer's amount. That is right, it takes only nine days to pay the farmer for a whole year's worth of food.

*S. O. 31*

Nine cents of a \$1.50 loaf of bread is returned to the farmer. Sixteen cents goes to the dairy farmer on a \$1.50 glass of milk. A waiter or waitress in a restaurant earns more on tips for serving the food than the farmer who produces it in the first place.

We need to recognize our primary producers so that Food Freedom Day can be a day that everyone can celebrate, including our farmers.

If you ate today, thank a farmer.

\* \* \*

#### FAMILY MEDIATION

**Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Northumberland, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House to express my support for the "Helping Families Succeed" initiative that has been launched by Family Mediation Canada, a national organization dedicating its efforts today to raising public awareness of the benefits of mediation.

Canadians have clearly signalled that families need services like mediation when parents separate or divorce.

While the amendments proposed in Bill C-22 are a very positive and timely step forward, changes to the law by themselves are not enough to improve the family justice system in Canada. Services are needed to ease the conflict and stress that come with separation and divorce and to help parents while they are making decisions about the care of their children.

Some parents need support to make decisions about their children's care. They need tools to help them minimize conflict, cooperate and work out child focused parenting arrangements. Alternative methods of resolving conflict, like mediation, can help Canadian families achieve these goals.

\* \* \*

#### QUEEN'S GOLDEN JUBILEE MEDALS

**Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the recipients of the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal for northern Saskatchewan.

They are Adam Charles from Stanley Mission; Carol Janvier from La Loche; Jason Robillard from Stoney Rapids; Francis P. Hankey from Goodsoil; Lloyd Yew from Dillon; Rachel Jobb from Southend; Leonard Adam from Fond Du Lac; Robert H. Gardiner from Île à La Crosse; Sheldon Natawayes from Sandy Bay; Marcia Merasty from Flying Dust; Robert Augier Jr. from Uranium City; Ovid Campbell from Beauval; Alice Tataryn from Anglin Lake; Oscar Beatty from Deschambault Lake; John Carriere from Cumberland House; Tammy Cook Searson from Lac La Ronge; Carol Gillis from Buffalo Narrows; Ron Michel from Pelican Narrows; Terri Daniels from Wollaston Lake; and George Smith from Pine House.

The honourees were equally recognized as elders, youth, women and men. I ask members to join me in congratulating these very special individuals.

*S. O. 31*

•(1405)

### CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

**Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the government refuses to ensure that sentences actually reflect the magnitude of the crime.

Two street racers each received conditional sentences of two years less a day and three years probation following their convictions for criminal negligence causing death. Irene Thorpe, out for an evening stroll, was struck and killed by one of them as they raced their cars on a Vancouver street. This sentence is entirely inappropriate. Criminal negligence causing death carries a maximum of life in prison. Allowing these men to spend their entire sentences at home devalues the life of their victim.

On the same day that these two were sent home as punishment, two others were allegedly racing on a street in Abbotsford. One of them T-boned a car driven by an elderly couple, completely destroying both vehicles. The estimated speed was more than 100 kilometres per hour. Police say it is a miracle the victims survived at all. The conditional sentences handed down earlier that day obviously had no deterrent effect.

Why is the government so reluctant to send a message that Canadians will not tolerate this carnage being inflicted on innocent victims?

\* \* \*

### EATING DISORDERS

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, disordered eating constitutes a spectrum of behaviour such as compulsive eating, unhealthy body fat, anorexia and bulimia nervosa and habitual dieting. Obesity affects one-quarter of Canadians. Some 1% to 2% of our population are diagnosed with anorexia nervosa and 3% to 5% with bulimia. One in four adolescents exhibit disordered eating habits and behaviours. Disordered eating can affect any socioeconomic status or gender. There is no single cause or cure, but the negative health effects are clear.

February 2 to 8 is recognized by health professionals as a week to increase awareness of disordered eating. I urge the federal government to take steps to increase public education on this issue and officially proclaim February 2 to 8 eating disorders week.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### CIRCUS INDUSTRY

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Quebecers started from nothing and are now among the best in the circus business. The 24th Festival mondial du cirque de demain de Paris decided to put the spotlight on Quebec by honouring, last Sunday, the Quebec circus.

This tribute is not the result of a sudden interest. In less than 20 years, Quebec has become a key nation in the development of circus arts. The Quebec circus has a distinct identity and style. It is the Middle Ages meets street theatre, with computers and tight management.

Quebec performers found themselves under the prestigious big top of the Cirque d'hiver de Paris. Mr. Daniel Cyr, from the Cirque Éloize, won a silver medal in competition.

Denys Tolstov, of the Cirque du Soleil, won a bronze medal for his impressive handstand performance. The young troupe Les sept doigts de la main won the Youri-Nikouline trophy, given to clowns under 30 years of age, for Diabolo juggling and balance.

Bravo to these artists and long live the circus.

\* \* \*

### COMMUNITY ACCESS CENTRES

**Ms. Yolande Thibeault (Saint-Lambert, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on January 27, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs announced, on behalf of the Minister of Industry, a contribution of \$136,000 to open eight community access centres in the riding of Repentigny.

The minister said the following:

Repentigny residents will benefit from affordable, convenient Internet access. The Community Access Program is an excellent example of partnership among governments, business and community groups.

Since 1995, more than 1,400 sites have been approved and set up in Quebec for a total investment of more than \$33 million by the Government of Canada.

This is yet another example, among many, of the federal government's constant funding for projects to—

•(1410)

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### NORTHERN B.C. WINTER GAMES

**Mr. Richard Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, Friday, February 7 marks the official opening of the 28th annual northern B.C. winter games. The games are being tri-hosted by the district of Fort St. James, the district of Vanderhoof and the village of Fraser Lake, all located in my riding of Prince George—Bulkley Valley.

Fourteen hundred participants from 35 different central interior and northern communities will compete in 21 different sporting events. Twelve hundred volunteers will support and coordinate the games, all fulfilling the games' mission statement "to be the northern opportunity for community and sport development".

It is a great honour for me to represent these communities in the great riding of Prince George—Bulkley Valley. I look forward to participating in the celebrations this week.

I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing them well in the most successful B.C. winter games.

*S. O. 31*

[*Translation*]

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Mr. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Black History Month is a celebration designed to recall, recognize and teach the importance of the history of Blacks in North America.

In Canada, this month was first celebrated in the 1970s and has now become an annual event celebrated across the country, particularly in large urban centres.

[*English*]

In order to honour and recognize Black History Month, the Government of Canada established the Mathieu Da Costa Challenge Awards in February 1996.

Mathieu Da Costa was the first of many persons of black ancestry to contribute to the building of Canada, the first recorded black person in Canada, arriving at the start of the 1600s, an interpreter who succeeded in bridging the linguistic gap between the Mi'kmaq people and the French explorers.

The Mathieu Da Costa challenge encourages students to research, discover and celebrate the contributions of Canadians of diverse ethnic and racial origins to the building of Canadian society. It helps them to develop a more inclusive notion of Canadian citizenship and identity and it underscores the values of equality, respect and tolerance which should inspire us all.

\* \* \*

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, February is Black History Month, a month in which we recognize the significant contributions that people of black heritage have made to Canada.

As a major terminal on the underground railway, Windsor was a central destination for those escaping slavery in the U.S., many of whom settled in and greatly enriched the development of the Windsor region.

Black Canadians have, in the fields of science, medicine, business, the military, politics, arts and sports, made Canada a richer country. In every walk of life, people of black heritage have played an important but unfortunately often overlooked role in the development and growth of this nation.

During Black History Month and throughout the year I encourage people to celebrate our diverse multicultural heritage. In particular, I encourage my colleagues to take the time to celebrate the many contributions that people of black heritage have made to Canada.

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[*Translation*]

### SEMAINE DES ENSEIGNANTES ET DES ENSEIGNANTS AU QUÉBEC

**Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the week of February 2 to 8 is the Semaine des enseignantes et des enseignants in Quebec.

I want to praise the extraordinary job that these women and men do for our youth. Who among us does not have unforgettable memories of a teacher who, at some point in our life, made our eyes sparkle with the joy of learning?

In the fall, these women and men reach out to the upcoming generation by awakening in them a passion for life and for knowledge as well as a desire to work together to find new ways of building a better world.

At a time when the problem of dropouts has become acute, we know that we can count on the creativity and imagination of our teachers to better prepare our youth for the future.

Recognizing the uniqueness of each young person and working steadfastly to fully develop each one's potential are the challenges facing our teachers who, day in and day out, shape the future of our youth and of Quebec as well.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### ANTI-SMOKING CAMPAIGN

**Mr. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to pay tribute to a strong, courageous and inspiring woman. Barb Tarbox is a 41 year old woman who has made it her crusade to teach Canadians, primarily young Canadians, about the fact that smoking kills.

This mother and wife, a former international model, is generously dedicating what are said to be her final days to speak with young Canadians across the country. She has already spoken to more than 20,000 teens.

Today Ms. Tarbox is here in Ottawa to share her story, a story that is simple but compelling: that smoking kills and all of us have a responsibility to ensure that our children do not start smoking and, for those who do, that they stop.

I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Ms. Tarbox for doing more than her part to reduce smoking among young Canadians.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the good news is that more money has been put into health care. The bad news is, it is not enough. The territories and several of the provinces have said it is not enough to do the job that has to be done.

The side story is that health care funding will be delivered outside the Canada health and social transfer formula. However, we have to make sure that money is dedicated to education. We will now see how much money actually goes into education and we will find that it is very little.

*Oral Questions*

By investing in our youth we avoid heavy health and social costs down the road. We must educate our young people to accept the responsibilities they will face in this country. The future of the country lies on the shoulders of our youth. We have to make sure we invest in education so that they will be able to carry that responsibility and make sure we continue to—

**The Speaker:** Order. Oral questions.

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## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

### HEALTH

**Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, last night the premiers and the Prime Minister signed a deal that is a commendable start to improving health care for Canadians.

Among the positive features are funding to restore the core of the health care system, flexibility for provinces in implementing new services and no restrictions on private health care delivery within the public system. Now of course—

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

**The Speaker:** We had better get on to the question. The preamble is taking a long time because of various interruptions. I urge the hon. leader to put his question so we can get on with it.

**Mr. Stephen Harper:** What Canadians really want, of course, is better access to doctors and hospital beds and shorter waiting lists.

I ask the Prime Minister, how long will Canadians have to wait to see this agreement lead to real improvement in the delivery of health care services?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** First, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that we have an agreement. The Canadian people using the hospital system will benefit.

Second, I am very happy too that all the premiers and the leaders of the territories agreed that the five conditions of medicare should be completely protected.

Third, they have agreed that the priorities that were put on the table should be acceptable to all and specific money should be directed to these priorities. It is the first time that we have an agreement where everybody is in agreement on the orientation to have a better health system in Canada.

**Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister will admit that the federal-provincial deal is a framework at this point in which many details are left to be worked out, including primary care reform, home care services, catastrophic drug coverage, the accountability and reporting framework and, of course, participation of territorial governments.

My question for the Prime Minister is, how can the House be assured that these details will be worked out without negotiations getting bogged down in federal-provincial wrangling?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I tabled a document that has been accepted by the premiers. I said, "If you want to have the money you have to accept this agreement". I did not advance the money on the table definitively unless they were to accept this agreement. The document has been tabled, circulated and approved by all the premiers of the provinces.

Of course they wanted more money. I wish I had more money, but the reality is that we are giving \$17.3 billion of new money over three years. I never thought I would be able to do that much.

• (1420)

**Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I would stay away from the rhetoric about money and pressure and concentrate on cooperation to get the details worked out.

The deal signed yesterday commits to establishing a health council to monitor and make annual reports. The health council will work with representatives from the provinces, the federal government, research institutions and existing organizations.

My question is for the Prime Minister. When will this council begin its work, how will the council make decisions and how will it monitor improvements to the health care system?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a system where all the premiers agreed with me that it is very important that accountability and transparency be well understood by the people. They said they would collaborate, that we would be able from there on to compare apples with apples and oranges with oranges, and the provinces would compare their success in relation to the others.

If the federal government is not doing in its own jurisdiction the appropriate work that it should do, we will be able to know that, compared to the provincial governments. It is an accountability and clarity that will be very useful in the system.

\* \* \*

### IRAQ

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, in his acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957, Lester Pearson said:

—the predatory state...with power of total destruction, is no more to be tolerated than the predatory individual.

What will it take for the government to get off the fence and join the growing international coalition that says they will no longer tolerate the actions of Saddam Hussein?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have had the same position since last summer. We said no activities, and that war cannot start there unless there is an agreement with approval of the Security Council. In resolution 1441 it has demanded that some inspectors go there and do the job. We have said they have to do their job and report back.

*Oral Questions*

Next week Dr. Blix will report again, and the Security Council will advise. If the Security Council approves the beginning of the war, of course Canada is always there to play its role.

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the fence is a precarious perch.

A former prime minister said:

While we can be grateful indeed for the United Nations intervention in this matter, I think we can also be grateful for the action taken by the United States in bringing its action to the United Nations. I think we can support, as the United Kingdom has supported and in every appropriate way, the position of the United States at the United Nations.

That was Lester Pearson again, during the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. Is that quote not just as referable today to the situation in Iraq?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians will make our own policies. I remember that I was a member of the House of Commons when the government did not support the intervention of the Americans in the Vietnam war.

We were not there. They asked us to be there. We were not. We are not always there. We make our own decisions, but I do say, yes, Saddam Hussein has to disarm. He has to respect resolution 1441. He has some more days to comply and he is taking a big risk if he does not comply soon.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister of Canada has not responded to the immediate needs of Quebec and the provinces as far as health funding is concerned, despite the fact that Ottawa has the means to do so.

How can the Prime Minister explain, especially to patients, that he has all the leeway necessary to pay the \$5.4 billion that is being asked for, but has decided not to go all the way, even though the surplus will be at least \$9 billion, according to the Minister of Finance?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, \$2.5 billion will be transferred to the provinces on March 31, 2003, and a total of \$17 billion in new money over the next three years, over and above what is being transferred under this year's budget.

He wanted more. I would have been surprised if he had said "That is too much". In my opinion, \$17 billion over three years is a lot of money.

• (1425)

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is a lot, but this comes out of the pockets of the taxpayers of Quebec and of the provinces, not his pockets or those of the Liberal Party. It is our own money.

The federal government is telling us that, if the federal surplus is greater than the contingency reserve in the next budget, the Prime Minister has committed to transferring up to \$2 billion more.

This year, we already know there will be much more than \$2 billion over and above the contingency reserve, and that it could be transferred this year. Why is he not doing so?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have referred to \$2.5 billion by year end, but there is another \$1.5 billion set aside this year to make it possible to give the provinces \$500 million a year for equipment over the next three years.

There is nothing that delights me more than to hear questions like these coming from Bloc Québécois members, as only a few years ago they wanted out of Canada because the country was bankrupt. All of a sudden, they believe that the Canadian government is managing public affairs too well and has too much money.

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, at the end of the meeting with his provincial counterparts, the Prime Minister said that when it comes to health care, it will always be difficult.

Does the Prime Minister not understand that the main reason there are problems in health care in Canada is that his government has cut health care funding since 1994 and he persists in refusing to put back the money needed to provide health care?

Simply put, he is the one with the money, and the provinces are the ones with the obligations. That is the real problem.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have provided \$17 billion for the next three years. This is new money added to the budget starting April 1, 2003. That is the reality.

I would like to remind the hon. member that Quebec ranks 9 out of 10 when it comes to spending its own money for patients in the province. Perhaps they should do a bit more themselves before pointing the finger at others.

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, all of the experts who have studied health care, Mr. Romanow, Mr. Kirby, and Michel Clair in Quebec, all agree on one thing: the huge amounts needed to support the health care system.

How can the Prime Minister—who has the money that is needed—justify to the public, including Shawinigan's ER, the fact that he is not even providing half of the money needed to fix the health care system?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Romanow report called for \$15 billion over the next three years. What we offered yesterday was \$17 billion in new money, money that will be added to provincial budgets over the next three years.

I think I may have made a mistake; maybe I should have stopped at \$15 billion.

[English]

**Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

This morning the three northern territorial premiers condemned the new health accord, pointing out that the Prime Minister ignored the appalling third world health conditions among aboriginal peoples and the failure of per capita funding to provide the desperately needed resources in the north.

*Oral Questions*

Why did the Prime Minister ignore Romanow? Why did he ignore all of the premiers in this shameful betrayal of northern and aboriginal Canadians? Specifically, why will the Prime Minister not establish a separate northern health fund of at least \$60 million for the three northern territories?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we were discussing a formula on a per capita basis and, of course, the per capita basis is not satisfactory for the territorial governments.

I said to the three leaders that this is a different type of problem. It makes no sense to treat them exactly the same way as the provinces because their populations are too small.

I said there will be other meetings. We will adjust the health requirements for the people of the north on a bilateral basis because it could not be treated the same way as the provinces on a per capita basis. That makes no sense at all for them.

**Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister made the same promise in 2000, and northern and aboriginal Canadians are still waiting for that promise to be kept.

One of the greatest threats to medicare in Canada is the growth of private for profit health care delivery combined with the impact of corporate trade deals.

I want to ask the Prime Minister, why is it that his health accord is totally silent on the new public health dollars going into private for profit health care and why did the Prime Minister try to appoint Don Mazankowski, the king of the privatizers, as the new chair of the Canada health council?

• (1430)

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I had the agreement of all the premiers of all the provinces that the five conditions of medicare will be respected.

It is the law of the land that all of the provinces must respect and if they do not respect the five conditions of medicare, they will face the normal penalties that we had to carry out previously when some provinces did not respect the five conditions of medicare.

**Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister stood in his place yesterday and admitted that the government is playing a shell game with new money versus old money in health care.

As evidence of that, the provinces are saying they are getting \$12 billion, the federal government is saying \$17 billion, and the health minister is saying something else. She is completely confused on how much new money is going in.

Will the Prime Minister stand up and tell us how much money is really going into the new health care accord?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, new money, above the budget for this year for every one of these provinces, represents \$17.3 billion of new money.

They say that the money that we had promised three years ago that is new money this year is not new money any more. We have not paid it yet. It is old new money versus new new money. For me, new money is new money. Paying in \$5 or in \$10, it is the same money.

**Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC):** Mr. Speaker, would it not be nice if the Prime Minister learned to add and subtract? He knows how to subtract, but his addition is still off.

Is it not interesting that yesterday the provinces grudgingly accepted the deal, yet the territorial ministers could not and that is where the need is the greatest? Our aboriginal people suffer the most in terms of health care. Is that the final chapter? Is that the legacy the Prime Minister will leave in the aboriginal community, this scanty bit of money for those people with the greatest need?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, it makes no sense to deal with the territories on a per capita basis. It is why I told them that we have to make a special agreement with them in the weeks to come, and it would be new new money, no doubt about it.

What is surprising is that none of those members talk about the sick people who will be benefiting from what we did yesterday.

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**IRAQ**

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, last week the Prime Minister said in the House:

...if the opposition believes that the government is not doing its job properly, it can always vote non-confidence.

The motion before us today gives the House the opportunity to express its confidence in the government by voting on any decision it might take before sending our military into a war with Iraq.

Here is a chance for the Prime Minister to back his words with action. Will he support the motion before the House today?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the opposition wants us to vote today about a decision that we might never have to make because if Saddam Hussein obliges and respects resolution 1441 there will be no need for any vote at all.

If it wants to vote, it can always use an opposition day the day after the decision. It can use one of its 14 days where it can have a votable motion, and we will vote. But it depends on the opposition. If it wants to use its privilege of one of those 14 days where we can vote, it must use one of those days for that occasion.

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I wish the Prime Minister would read the motion.

However, since he is suggesting that we do not need this motion today because the rules already provide for motions of opposition non-confidence, if that is what he is saying, well then I will take the Prime Minister up on his offer.

If he will guarantee that he will schedule an official opposition allotted day the day after the government makes a decision to involve Canadian troops, then we will withdraw our motion right here, right now.



*Oral Questions*

•(1435)

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the opposition wants to do that, I have no objection. It is exactly why we have opposition days, for serious matters, not the usual frivolity that it puts on the floor of the House of Commons.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Foreign Affairs described Secretary of State Colin Powell's evidence as convincing.

Is the doubt that Mr. Powell raised in the mind of the minister not in itself enough to show the need to increase the effectiveness of the inspections and the number of inspectors?

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I explained this morning before the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, that is precisely what the Security Council is seized of. Mr. Blix is going to Baghdad. What Mr. Colin Powell presented yesterday was extraordinarily well documented. Baghdad has to give answers. Mr. Blix is committed, he will go there and appear again before the Security Council on February 14. At that time we will know if inspections are no longer needed or what decisions need to be made.

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is all well and good to say that we support the inspections process, but that is not enough. Yesterday, France and Russia offered resources. Canada talks only of taking part in the war.

Concretely, in terms of materiel, personnel, transport facilities and communications, what does the government intend to offer the inspectors so that they can fully and peacefully disarm Saddam Hussein?

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I explained this morning in committee, the Canadian government has always offered Mr. Blix and the inspectors all the support they want from our country.

I personally spoke with Mr. Blix and we wrote to him. There are Canadian inspectors on the team. We are very proud of the work they are doing for the international community. We continue to support this inspection process with everything in our power.

[*English*]

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, a multilateral predeployment of military forces to the gulf is necessary to force Saddam Hussein to respect resolution 1441. Unfortunately, yesterday the defence minister said that Canadian Forces are "...making contingency plans in terms of various possibilities in Afghanistan..." This is unacceptable. Canada's place should not be on the sidelines.

To prevent war, does the minister not agree that predeploying troops to the gulf would help pressure Saddam Hussein to comply with resolution 1441?

**Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member only captured part of what I said yesterday. I said that as is always the case for the military, we are always considering contingencies of various kinds for the future so that we are ready when the government instructs the military what to do.

We were in Afghanistan last summer. It is conceivable we may be there at some time in the future. We are also discussing with the Americans, as I have said many times, the possibility of our participation in Iraq should the government so decide.

There are many possible contingencies and we are considering many of them at the same time.

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, earlier this morning the foreign affairs minister said that Canada was not absent on this issue.

Regrettably, the government's record of engagement has been to sit on the fence. In fact, the minister has ruled out every option available to the Canadian government and has instead insisted that Hans Blix, France or the United Nations should decide Canadian foreign policy.

How can we pretend Canada is engaged when the minister allows the veto power of other governments to decide our participation in any potential action?

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the government is engaged in a very active policy of supporting a UN system which is a possible solution to an enormously grave problem in the world. That is our policy and that is why we pushed it.

It may not be the policy that the opposition likes. I know what the opposition's policy is because it has said it over and over again: if the Americans ask, go for it. We have heard that.

I do not consider that a policy. It is a nice easy thing to do, but we have followed a much more complicated, much more difficult, but responsible policy that responds to the needs of the world and the needs of this particular crisis.

\* \* \*

•(1440)

[*Translation*]

**SOFTWOOD LUMBER**

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister for International Trade has indicated that he is open to temporarily imposing an export tax on Canadian softwood lumber destined for the United States, in exchange for free access to the American market.

Is the minister aware that Canada is weakening its position by voluntarily imposing an export tax on itself, because the Americans could then claim that this voluntary tax is proof that countervailing duties were justified?

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my position has not changed. We adopted this position last year with the support of all the provinces. My position has always been to say that we will take our case against the Americans before the WTO and NAFTA. We have a very good case, and the initial decisions were in our favour.

However, since this process takes a long time, we have determined that it would be useful to have a dialogue with the Americans to establish a long-term policy for unlimited access to the American market for Canadian softwood lumber.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in this matter, the minister has made several commitments, in particular, not to resort to a voluntary tax. Despite what he has said today in the House, the minister is changing his position.

Will he make a formal commitment not to enter into any provisional agreement that would continue to penalize our businesses and would result in abandoning legal actions already before the WTO and NAFTA?

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will continue to work with the Canadian industry all across Canada. I will continue to work with the Government of Quebec and the Government of British Columbia. I will continue to reflect a consensus that we developed in our approach, which is to obtain unlimited access to the American market for Canadian softwood lumber companies, on the basis of free trade, throughout North America.

[English]

**Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the mandate of the federal government includes responsibility for international trade agreements. At the softwood talks in Washington the provinces and industry tabled various export tax proposals.

Why is it that everyone but the federal government is taking the lead?

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for accompanying me for those two days in Washington. With what we have been going through, it has been very useful.

The Government of Canada likes working with the provinces. We appreciate their contributions because they are essential to this process as they manage the forestry programs and regimes in this country.

However, we are negotiating and Mr. Doug Waddell is the leader of those negotiations. He is a great co-ordinator. We listen to other people. We are in charge. We are doing a great job these days in Washington.

**Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the U.S. lumber lobby is demanding that any softwood deal requires Canada to drop its legal challenges through NAFTA and WTO.

Will the minister assure the House that Canada will not drop its legal options unless the provinces and industry are in agreement?

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the position of our government has not changed. We are on a two track approach. This two track approach was adopted by all the provinces and was supported widely by industry. We are continuing with our challenges before the WTO and NAFTA.

In the meantime, we are having dialogue. I had lunch on Tuesday with about 20 chief executive officers of the softwood lumber industry. We are all working together to bring a resolution to this issue. What we want is unrestricted market access to the United States.

**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, considering the widespread opposition to genetically engineered wheat by overseas buyers, and considering that several agricultural groups, including the national farmers union, oppose the introduction of genetically engineered wheat, could the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food inform the House as to whether he will refrain from approving the release in Canada of genetically engineered wheat?

• (1445)

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has not yet reviewed the submissions for roundup ready wheat. There is a process where the Canadian Food Inspection Agency reviews such a submission for safety to animals and safety to the environment. Health Canada reviews the submission for safety to humans. That evaluation certainly is not complete because the submission has just come in.

I can assure the House and Canadians that submission will be conducted and that evaluation will be very thorough because we understand the concerns of everyone on this issue.

\* \* \*

**AIRLINE INDUSTRY**

**Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's airline industry is once again on the brink of a crisis. Air Canada announced a \$364 million loss, threats of 10,000 lost jobs and a cancellation of regional flights.

Government security taxes and increases to NavCan fees continue to damage an already struggling industry. Overcapacity on routes where Air Canada is trying to drive out low cost carriers is jeopardizing all carriers.

The government needs to listen to those who say to get rid of the security tax and regulate capacity. This is the way to help the industry. When will the minister react?

**Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the air security charge, the Minister of Finance has said that this is under review, and one can assume that he might have something to say about that shortly.

With respect to the other suggestion about re-regulating the domestic air industry, this flies in the face of conventional wisdom and the good of the consumer. The fact is that, yes, today there is some turmoil in the marketplace but the fact is that people have the lowest fares in history, and that has come as a result of deregulation.

The issue with Air Canada is a much more complex one which I would be willing to elaborate on in a supplementary.

\* \* \*

**HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT**

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in spite of all the hype from the Treasury Board about government online, HRDC is removing all the electronic job search kiosks from public places on March 1. The 14 job kiosks in my riding alone recorded over 150,000 hits in a single year.

*Oral Questions*

In light of the obvious need and demand for this service, will the minister agree to postpone the decision, leave the kiosks where they are and, if anything, upgrade them to provide an even better service to the thousands of Canadians who use them every day?

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to say to the hon. member that my focus continues to be to ensure that Canadians have the best service possible from my department.

He speaks about online service and indeed that is what Canadians want. These external kiosks are dumb terminals and can only provide information on one program. What we have found is that Canadians prefer to use the Internet.

In the member's own riding there are a number of sites across the riding, whether they be in our local human resources centres or in 19 public libraries, that will provide this service to his constituents.

\* \* \*

**SOFTWOOD LUMBER**

**Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC):** Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister for International Trade, yesterday the parliamentary secretary answered a question but, in his excitement about answering a question for the first time, I think he made an error that needs to be corrected.

With respect to the department's proposed export tax, he said "we are going to make sure that all provinces are treated equally". That statement is wrong and it could jeopardize the Atlantic Canada exemption costing millions of dollars to the Atlantic Canadian industry.

Will the minister retract the statement that all provinces will be treated equally under the softwood export tax and correct the record?

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let us be very clear. We are not going to renegotiate the situation of Atlantic Canada that has been exempted. We are trying to exempt the rest of Canada. That is the objective of the government.

**Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC):** Mr. Speaker, if only he could do that job he would be a hero but he has not been able to do it.

Anyway, the record is straight. There is not equal treatment across the country.

However the export tax design draft dated February 4, yesterday's date, says "A key feature of the export tax design would be to discourage production during times of low lumber prices. To do this the export tax should increase as prices fall".

Will the minister confirm that his proposal for a fluctuating tax rate will be determined by a U.S. publication and that Revenue Canada will be collecting this Canadian tax as calculated using the U.S. information?

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what the government wants is unrestricted access to the United States market for softwood lumber. What the government will not do is what the Conservatives did in 1986 when they imposed

an export tax and did not solve the problem for the long term. Now we are at it every four or five years.

\* \* \*

● (1450)

**AIRLINE INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government currently presides over the most disastrous airline policy in the history of the country. From higher prices to the failure of Canadian Airlines, to unending user fees and security taxes, the government has brought the airline industry to the brink. The minister refers to it as a little turmoil.

Today Air Canada slapped a for sale sign on its Jazz subsidiary to continue its dogfight with WestJet. Air Canada itself has run up a \$12 billion debt.

What specific steps will the government take to protect the air travellers and the airline industry in the country?

**Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the airline industry around the world has faced turbulence since September 11, 2001. It is being exacerbated by the current tensions in the Middle East and the spiral of fuel prices.

When the hon. member talks about airline policy, I might remind him that it was his party, the Reform Party in 2000, that supported the government and Bill C-26. As the Alliance, it supported us on Bill C-23.

I thought the opposition was supporting the government, so we spoke with one voice on airline policy. I think the Alliance members should recognize the truth.

**Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, we did not support the \$24 tax, this cash cow for the government that brought the airline industry to the brink.

Once again the employees of Jazz face an uncertain future. The former minister of finance imposed the \$24 tax while milking the industry with higher airport rents.

How can Canadians trust the government when it continues to treat the entire airline industry as a cash cow to put into general revenues? How can Canadians possibly trust the future with this minister or this government?

**Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that the hon. member could have added more to the debate than just the rhetoric of going after the air security charge, which the Minister of Finance has said is under review.

The fact is that there are two major airlines in the United States under chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings. There have been failures around the world. There are international tensions. We have to work this issue out and we have to be supportive of the airline industry.

However the end result will have to be a restructured Air Canada so we can have long term viability in the airline industry.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the discussions on the agriculture policy framework have stalled. The minister decided to throw his weight around. Farmers are worried and do not like it that what they had negotiated with the Quebec government is being called into question.

Will the Minister of Agriculture listen to all the stakeholders in Quebec and agree to channel the financial mechanisms he is proposing through the Financière agricole du Québec, yes or no?

[English]

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as a government we have said very clearly that we will treat every farmer in similar circumstances in Canada the same with the federal support.

Even the minister in the province of Quebec in 2001, at a federal-provincial ministers meeting, agreed that we needed to move to a basic program of crop insurance and the NISA, including a disaster payment.

However, that does not prohibit provinces, such as Quebec, as they have in the past and can continue to do in the future, from supporting their producers as they see fit above and beyond that. We live in a country where the provinces can do that if they so wish.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture is brushing aside objections by the farmers' unions and the provincial ministers.

Is it not time for the Prime Minister to step in to avoid having the farmers pay for the intransigence of this minister, who no longer seems to care about the interests of farmers?

[English]

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, more consultations have taken place with the ministers and the agricultural industry in the last 18 to 20 months than have ever taken place in the development and the design of the present and the future business risk management programs that we have. That has been very successful. We had a very successful agriculture ministers meeting last week in Toronto.

There is still more work to be done and more progress to be made but I can assure the member that we have accomplished and met pretty well all the desires of the primary producers, and we will continue to do the best job we—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake.

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to disagree. The government is hanging our farmers out to dry with this agriculture policy framework. No agreement has been reached with either the provinces or the farm groups regarding safety nets. The April 1 deadline is fast approaching with no agreement. The federal safety net proposals to date will have farmers paying higher premiums for lower benefits.

Why is the federal agriculture minister shoving a bad deal down the throats of our farmers?

● (1455)

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member, as a member of the committee, had a presentation this morning which showed, for example, that the amount of money that a farmer needs to invest to ensure stabilization and disaster coverage is considerably less on an annual basis than it has been in the past. It will also give coverage to producers for back to back disasters if that unfortunately is the situation. It will also give immediate coverage for beginning farmers. It will be very affordable. It will be more trade receptive than we are at the present time. I could go on.

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the minister could go on but the farmers will not be any better off. I can guarantee that.

The \$1.1 billion that is supposed to come out every year is in a program that has a rolling effect to it. In fact, if the money is not paid out, it rolls to the next year and then to the next year. What we will be seeing is farmers not getting \$1.1 billion a year like they have in the past.

This agriculture policy framework is putting less money into the pockets of farmers and the minister had better explain to farmers why that should be.

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, until the Prime Minister and I made the announcement last June, the farmers had \$600 million from the federal government for business risk management, and then we went on an ad hoc basis each year. The farmers, the provinces and the producers did not know what other support was there.

We now have \$1.1 billion a year there for each of the next five years, and that security is there. I can assure the hon. member that if he takes a look at that he would see that for farmers to have a 70% coverage of a \$100,000 production margin, they only need to put \$3,500 down on the—

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

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**HEALTH**

**Mr. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, given the unique circumstances and special conditions in the north and the fact that the territorial governments did not agree with the health care accord yesterday, could the government please tell us how it plans to solidify this important partnership for the effective delivery of health care in the north.

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me reassure the hon. member that we are very aware of the unique circumstances of the three territories. One is dealing with very small populations over very large areas and some unique and pressing health issues.

I have made the commitment to my three health minister colleagues, as well as the three territorial leaders, that as soon as they want to sit down with me to talk about how we can implement this accord in the territories to serve the interests of their people, I will be happy to do so at their convenience.

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#### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it has been about a year now since Dakota Tipi first nation was put under federal government management. Since that time, incidents of violence, including stabbings and beatings, have increased. There has been a case of arson. Last week the school was set ablaze. At the root of the problem are allegations of corruption and mismanagement in the handling of millions of dollars.

The minister's avoidance response thus far has been to refuse to launch any investigation. The Canadian Alliance's first concern is the safety of the residents of Dakota Tipi.

Will the minister commit today to launching a public inquiry that will get to the bottom of the problem and perhaps prevent—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

**Hon. Robert Nault (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the member knows very well, a number of months ago this first nation was brought under section 74 of the Indian Act, which includes the requirement to have an election on reserve. That election took place not too long ago.

This is the first time this community has had an election in over 20 years. It is a new structure for them. Because of that, there are some significant issues of healing that need to take place in the community. It is the objective of the government through mediation to work with the community to ensure that happens.

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, Canadian Alliance):** Sweeping this under the rug will not do, Mr. Speaker.

According to a band councillor the mediator just called off his investigation this morning, so mediation will not work and the minister knows that. We have to get to the bottom of the root of the problem. The problem is the mismanagement of millions of dollars. Without an investigation, the facts will not be revealed and the healing cannot begin.

Again, let me ask the minister this. We are calling for a public inquiry. The only person who does not seem to want a public inquiry is the minister. The band council does and we do. Will the minister launch a public inquiry?

• (1500)

**Hon. Robert Nault (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is news to me. I have not heard from the council or any member of the community saying that they are in favour of a public inquiry. What they are in favour of is good governance, working toward building a community through the work of mediation and the work of healing.

There is a process to deal with wrongdoing. It is called the RCMP and the police forces. If there is corruption and/or allegations of that

nature, I say to this member and any member of the House, bring that information to the proper authorities.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### IMMIGRATION

**Ms. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the restoration of the mechanism of temporarily returning asylum seekers to the United States has meant that a number of them have been jailed in that country while awaiting a meeting with an officer of Immigration Canada. The department is no longer demanding the assurance that these people will be able to make it to their appointments.

Given Canada's international commitments on the protection of refugees, will the minister commit to reinstating the directive requiring U.S. authorities to ensure that any asylum seekers in custody will indeed be able to attend their interview with Immigration Canada?

**Hon. Denis Coderre (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, if the hon. member had followed developments at all, she would have been aware that those who have an appointment with Immigration Canada, if detainees, have for the most part been released by the American authorities.

No formal agreement is required. The U.S. government, which is after all a signatory of the Geneva Convention, has its own way of doing things.

Our position, informally, is that those who have an agreement to come to Canada should be allowed to return. So I do not see—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Erie—Lincoln.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### FIREARMS REGISTRY

**Mr. John Maloney (Erie—Lincoln, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the House has been seized with the issue of gun control and public safety for some time now.

Following the report of the Auditor General and given the concerns expressed over cost, are there any measures that can be introduced to reduce these costs while maintaining the high level of public safety that Canadians currently receive?

**Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for that very important question. As everyone knows, at the beginning of the week, reports were tabled with regard to the situation in the gun control program. If we look at Mr. Hession's report, for example, there are 16 recommendations that will have to be taken into consideration to prepare our plan of action.

*Speaker's Ruling*

One thing that is very important as a first step is the implementation of the amendment of Bill C-10A. Bill C-10A would streamline the process and at the same time would reduce the cost of the program. I need the support of the House because we believe in public safety.

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**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of a distinguished Canadian, Ms. Barb Tarbox, a lifetime smoker diagnosed with lung cancer, who is on a Canada-wide anti-smoking crusade aimed at getting teenagers to stop smoking.

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

\* \* \*

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the government House leader what the business is for the rest of this week and next week and if there is anything new coming along?

**Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will start with the rest of this day and then go on with the future agenda.

If the opposition follows through with its offer, as promised during question period, to withdraw its motion today on the strength of the commitment made by the Prime Minister to, on the first day following military deployment should there be one which we all hope of course there would not be, call a votable opposition day that would free up the rest of the day.

Following that, this afternoon we would then deal with Bill C-19. Should there be any time left we would call Bill C-22, although I suspect that there would not be that much time, and perhaps Bill C-19 would take us close to the end.

• (1505)

[*Translation*]

Tomorrow we shall begin the third reading stage of Bill C-6, the Specific Claims Resolution Act, followed by Bill C-2, an act to establish a process for assessing the environmental and socio-economic effects of certain activities in Yukon.

Monday next, and Thursday as well, shall be allotted days.

Tuesday morning, we shall be resuming consideration of Bill C-13 on assisted reproduction. After oral question period, we shall begin consideration of Bill C-24 on political financing. Wednesday, we shall resume consideration of any unfinished business, with the possibility of continuing debate on Bill C-24.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Reynolds:** Mr. Speaker, if the government House leader would like to put his recommendation for this in writing, we could probably negotiate the next little while. If the government is prepared to guarantee us a votable opposition day the day after the government makes a decision on going to war and if he would also guarantee us that if the House is not sitting the Speaker would be

allowed to call it back so we could have that vote, we would then certainly be prepared to do that. If the government House leader wants to make that recommendation, we will certainly listen to it.

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, we will get into that in the debate, but even the motion that was proposed by the opposition does not do that. It was totally unprepared to get yes for an answer today. It did, and now it absolutely does not know what to do about it.

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**POINTS OF ORDER**

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**The Speaker:** I am now prepared to rule on the point of order raised on January 27 by the hon. government House leader concerning written questions and the difficulties experienced by the government in responding to them within the 45 day deadline established pursuant to Standing Order 39(5)(a).

I would like to thank the hon. government House leader for having raised this matter as well as the hon. House leader for the official opposition and the hon. member for St. John's West for their interventions.

In presenting his case, the hon. government House leader stated that Questions Nos. 59 to 71 and 77, placed on the Notice Paper on November 20 and 21, 2002, requested a significant amount of information related to government grants, loans, contributions and contracts awarded in certain constituencies over an eight year period. He went on to argue that the very nature of the questions made it virtually impossible for the government to respond within the 45 day deadline set for its responses.

[*Translation*]

The hon. government House leader presented several facts in support of that position. He noted that information of this nature is kept on file for a maximum period of six years. He also mentioned that government departments are not required to keep such records on a constituency basis. Furthermore, he pointed out that all the information collected for such a government response requires translation pursuant to S.O. 32(4), which stipulates that any document distributed or laid before the House must be in both official languages.

[*English*]

To remedy the dilemma he described, the hon. government House leader went on to suggest amending Standing Order 39(6) that currently allows certain questions to be transferred to Motions for the Production of Papers, so that it could provide another avenue for the government to respond to longer questions.

In concluding his remarks, the hon. government House leader also suggested that the Clerk, who is responsible for reviewing and accepting written questions for publication on the Notice Paper, should reject any question that was "unreasonable" or that was so poorly drafted that it requires multiple clarifications.

*Speaker's Ruling*

First, let me clear up one point. The hon. government House leader complained that the disputed questions sought information from the government about non-governmental organizations. However, as I read these questions, information is sought about "quasi non-governmental organizations funded by the government". These quangos, as they are known in the United Kingdom, are in fact public bodies, defined as bodies having a role in the processes of government and, though not reporting to a minister, bodies for which ministers are ultimately responsible. Thus, it seems to me that the questions do, in fact, seek this information from the appropriate source.

[*Translation*]

Now let us return to the matter at hand. I should first say that since January 27, when this point of order was raised, the government has tabled responses to all the questions dealt with in the complaint.

Strictly speaking, the responses were tabled after the deadline provided for in Standing Order 39(5)(a) had passed.

• (1510)

[*English*]

Since the Chair took this point of order under advisement on January 27, the designation of these questions and their reference to committee were held in abeyance, pending my ruling. Now, since the responses are in, the Chair will not designate these questions nor will these questions be referred to committee. However, I want to be very clear on this. This is a relatively new procedure and I am prepared to give the government the benefit of the doubt in this instance. In the future though, the application of deadlines will be strictly applied and a non-response to a question will not be mitigated by the fact that a point of order has been raised about the question and that the House must await a ruling.

[*Translation*]

In summary then, there is no longer an immediate problem with regard to this particular set of questions. However, the Chair is nevertheless prepared to share its conclusions on the point of order raised in the hope that it may prove helpful in future situations.

Having reviewed the issues raised by the hon. government House leader, I must confess a certain reluctance to intervene in the matter. Let me explain.

[*English*]

I would refer hon. members to the ruling made by Mr. Speaker Fraser on June 14, 1989, referred to by the hon. government House leader in his arguments. Specifically, let me cite what I believe is a succinct statement of the continuing problem regarding written questions, and I quote:

The dilemma is this: we must find a balance between the urgent requirements of Members who need information in order to function and the equal imperative of a rational and fair use of the limited resources available to provide answers.

The ruling continues:

There is also a procedurally quite acceptable practice simply to respond by saying that the question cannot be answered because of the time and the human or financial resources involved. The Government may continue the practice of simply declining, with an explanation, to answer questions which it finds are too burdensome. It should be understood that there is no obligation on the Government to provide a perfect answer, only a fair one.

Mr. Speaker Fraser continues with a very important caveat:

A Member in framing his or her question would accept part of the responsibility for the quality of the answer.

[*Translation*]

In short, our procedure permits the government to respond to a question or questions by stating that the question cannot be answered because of the time and the human or financial resources involved.

[*English*]

Perhaps ironically, this is what the hon. government House leader did, even as he presented his point of order. In making his case, he stated that the government could not respond to Questions Nos. 59 to 71 and 77, because of certain ambiguities in the line of questioning, because of the time involved in compiling the information requested, and because of the human and financial resources involved.

On another front, the hon. government House leader posits that one remedy to the current situation he faces is that the Clerk's staff should exercise greater rigour in accepting written questions for the Notice Paper.

I cannot agree with this argument for, no matter what degree of rigour is applied to the process, it is not possible for House staff to form any accurate assessment of the resources necessary to prepare a reply. There will always be differences of opinion between the government and members of the opposition as to the way questions are formulated as well as to whether adequate information is provided in response.

[*Translation*]

Staff under the aegis of the Clerk review written questions submitted as to form and whether they conform with our guidelines, but they cannot be charged with assessing the merits of these questions, or whether the government will or will not be in a position to respond to them.

[*English*]

Marleau and Montpetit at page 441 makes the following point:

Acting on the Speaker's behalf, the Clerk has full authority to ensure the questions placed on the Notice Paper conform with the rules and practices of the House. Given that the purpose of a written question is to seek and receive a precise, detailed answer, it is incumbent on a Member submitting a question for the Notice Paper "to ensure that it is formulated carefully enough to elicit the precise information sought".

Similarly, as hon. members know, there is no provision in our rules for the Speaker to review the content of responses, nor would that be appropriate. In this regard I would simply state that any member not satisfied with the response provided by the government may raise supplemental questions either orally or in written form.

I should mention that the current situation may well be rooted in the frustration that members experience with regard to the constraints imposed on them with regard to written questions. I can remember a time when members were not limited in the number of questions they could place on the Order Paper whereas today Standing Order 39(4) limits members to four questions at any one time.

*Privilege*

It is perhaps not entirely surprising that members have shown their usual ingenuity in coping with this constraint and have taken to crafting multipart questions of the kind that are the subject of the minister's complaint.

Where there might have been pointed questions each addressed to a particular department or agency, there is now one question which blankets all departments and agencies and throws in quangos for good measure. The minister is left with a rather thankless task of compiling all this information within the 45-day limit if he is to respect the deadline for responses.

• (1515)

[*Translation*]

As I stated at the outset, I have concluded after reviewing this situation that the Chair cannot adjudicate on the merits of written questions asked of the government any more than it can judge the merits of the responses the government provides.

The Clerk and his officials are entrusted the task of ensuring that written questions are permissible as to form only; it falls to the government to determine whether it can offer a response, given the nature and scope of the question.

[*English*]

Since responses to the specific questions that gave rise to this point of order have now been tabled in the House, the Chair considers this particular case to be closed and trusts that this decision will help to clarify the situation in the future.

If hon. members remain concerned about the current rules relating to written questions, I would suggest that the matter be taken up by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs or by the Special Committee on Modernization and Improvement of the Procedures of the House of Commons which is also currently tasked with reviewing our procedures.

\* \* \*

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**The Speaker:** I am now prepared to rule on the point of order raised on January 29, 2003 by the hon. member for St. Albert concerning the government's response to a question that he had placed on the Order Paper.

The hon. member for St. Albert argued that the answer provided by the government was, by its own admission, incomplete and that this constitutes a failure by the government to reply within the 45-day period provided for in Standing Order 39(5)(a). He therefore requested that the matter of this failure be referred to the appropriate standing committee as provided for in Standing Order 39(5)(b).

I have examined the remarks made by the hon. member for St. Albert with care but can find no grounds for proceeding as he suggests. Our procedure in such matters is clearly stated in the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* at page 443:

There are no provisions in the rules for the Speaker to review government responses to questions.

It is not within the powers of the Chair to judge the adequacy of an answer. The government, in providing the response which was tabled on January 27, 2003, has complied with the requirements of the standing order and I am therefore not in a position to instruct that the matter be referred to committee.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member has indicated that the government intends to present further material with respect to this question. This, too, is in keeping with our practice. On page 443 of Marleau and Montpetit, which I referred to just a moment ago, it is also stated that:

On occasion, the government has supplied supplementary replies to questions already answered.

[*English*]

That is, apparently, what is intended in the present case.

I thank the hon. member for St. Albert for having drawn this matter to the attention of the House. If he wishes to seek further information from the government on this topic, or on any other matter, he is free to place further questions on the Order Paper.

The Chair has noticed a further intervention on a question to be raised by the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**PRIVILEGE**

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON NON-MEDICAL USE OF DRUGS

**Ms. Carole-Marie Allard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, I want to thank the Chair for giving me this opportunity to address the question of privilege on the premature and unauthorized disclosure of the minority report of the Special Committee on Non-Medical Use of Drugs, which was tabled before Christmas by the hon. Bloc Québécois member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve.

The hon. member claimed that, based on a number of newspaper articles, of which I did not receive a copy, it is clear that certain members of the committee gave interviews which, to a large extent, enabled reporters to learn the contents of the report before it was tabled in the House of Commons.

I asked to see these articles, and yesterday I was sent a three paragraph article published in the daily *Le Droit*. I do not know if you have other articles in your possession, but I assume that this is the only one that was tabled to support the motion of the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve.

The first two paragraphs do not quote anyone, but in the third paragraph my name is mentioned and I am said to have made the following statement:

The committee wanted to send a clear message to young people aged 12 to 18 that it is not legal to smoke marijuana.



*Privilege*

First, I want to say that I am extremely proud of the work done by the Special Committee on Non-Medical Use of Drugs. We had our work cut out for us because, as you know, right in the middle of our public consultations, the House referred a bill to us on the legalization of marijuana. From the outset, we set this hot button issue aside to allow the Senate committee, which was finishing up its report on the matter, to publish its recommendations.

You will recall that the conclusions of the Senate report were quite controversial and left us with a hot potato in our hands.

As a result, our committee was well aware of the importance of properly defining the priorities in the area of addictions. It therefore decided to split the committee report into two parts to be made public.

We decided to publish the first 39 recommendations in an interim report on December 9 and to save the last two recommendations for the final report, made public on December 12.

On December 9, the interim report was greeted with a great deal of attention from the media. We proposed 39 recommendations on addictions and our approach to solving the problem in Canada.

Each and every one of us, including the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, was interviewed on television and had journalists ask every possible and relevant question, as their job requires them to do.

All week, they tried to fit the pieces of the puzzle together so they could break the news about marijuana before the report was tabled on December 12.

I gave interviews all week long, and I felt it was my duty to do so. I even took part in a television show with the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve. Then, on December 12, our committee tabled its final report. The report contained the first report and also the two final recommendations that dealt with cannabis. Allow me to read the recommendations out loud.

**Recommendation number 40 specifies:**

The Committee recommends that the possession of cannabis continue to be illegal and that trafficking in any amount of cannabis remain a crime.

**Recommendation 41 stipulates:**

—that the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Health establish a comprehensive strategy for decriminalizing the possession and cultivation of not more than thirty grams of cannabis for personal use.

This strategy should include:

Prevention and education programs outlining the risks of cannabis use and, in particular, the heightened risk it poses to young persons; and

The development of more effective tools to facilitate the enforcement of existing Criminal Code prohibitions against driving while impaired by a drug.

This is the full text of the recommendations set out in the committee's final report released on December 12. So, it would seem that the allegation made by the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve does not hold. Let me explain why.

● (1520)

Although I am in fact quoted in the article, I do believe, with all due respect, that what I said was nothing new. The headline of the article I received from your office simply said “30 grams of pot, no more!”

I have sent to your office two other newspaper articles where the quote about the 30 grams is attributed to another member of Parliament. A number of articles were published during that week. I would remind the House that any reporter who had read the interim report would have easily come to the conclusion that we were not about to legalize marijuana; it was right there in black and white.

That is the first part of my answer. I am referring to the article I sent to your office, which says:

As a member of the special committee, the member from the Canadian Alliance... supported the cultivation of not more than 30 grams—

I would also point out that an anonymous source is quoted in this article. Would that be the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve? Or maybe the Alliance member right across from me? They just mention an anonymous source.

The article also mentioned that on December 9, the minister and member for Outremont indicated his intention to go ahead with a bill on decriminalization. Moreover, the Minister of Justice and member for Outremont has never stopped—since taking up his duties at the Department of Justice—saying that he is for the decriminalization of marijuana for recreational use. In the Speech from the Throne, there was a reference to this measure, which was felt to be imminent.

I also remember having heard the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve on a program on RDI, revealing—on the subject of marijuana—the basic position we would all take as a committee, which is, and this is my recollection of what he said, that it should remain illegal, but that recreational users of small quantities should no longer have criminal records.

My colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve also published two articles in Quebec last summer setting out his position.

I agree with my colleague, the member for Langley—Abbotsford, that we are not prohibited from talking to journalists in circumstances such as I described. Nor does it in any way constitute divulging the contents of a report.

From the moment an interim report is tabled, the eyes of the media are on us. As a member of the committee, the Alliance member opposite knows that we did all we could to publicly reflect the recommendations contained in the special committee's interim report.

At no time was the text of recommendations 40 and 41, in the form they appeared in the report, made public, which demonstrates that there were no leaks of the report before it was published.

I therefore submit that the report was not leaked. My comments reflected my concerns about the use of marijuana among young people, aged 12 to 18. This is a concern, incidentally, that I expressed publicly on numerous occasions during the committee's public hearings.

If I am guilty, then the other members of the committee are equally so, because each and every one of them, unless I am mistaken, was quoted in newspapers, starting with the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve.

*Supply*

I am tabling the article from December 12, which I brought to your attention, where the member for Vancouver East is mentioned. In it, she is quoted as saying:

But another member of the committee, New Democrat, Libby Davies, believes the opposite, that the committee, made up of a majority of Liberals, does not go far enough, because possession of cannabis is still considered illegal—

• (1525)

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I believe that the hon. member may not have understood the point raised by the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve. At any rate, her explanation is a little too lengthy and I hope she will immediately conclude her comments on this matter.

**Ms. Carole-Marie Allard:** Mr. Speaker, for all these reasons, I am asking you not to entertain the request by my colleague for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve.

**The Speaker:** As I have indicated already, the Chair will continue to consider this matter and I thank the hon. member for her presentation.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN IRAQ

The House resumed consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

**Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to share my time with the hon. member for Yukon.

[*Translation*]

I am pleased to have this opportunity to take part in this debate. I would like to trace the history of the role of the Canadian Parliament in relation to military operations. This role is very different from the one that some members have presented.

Between 1947 and 2001, Canada sent troops to take part in 42 missions abroad. Fourteen of these missions were the subject of a debate in this House. I wish to point out that since this government was first elected, it has kept the promise that it made in the 1993 red book to “expand the rights of Parliament to debate major Canadian foreign policy initiatives, such as the deployment of peacekeeping forces—”

Indeed, since 1993, our government has consulted Parliament through take note debates on the deployment of peacekeeping troops in the Balkans and in Afghanistan. It is now consulting Parliament regarding the situation in Iraq, and we had a debate on this issue last week.

• (1530)

[*English*]

I spoke of the history of some of this. In World War II, Parliament did not vote on the declaration of war. The House voted indirectly on the proclamation of the state of war with Germany as it was the subject of estimates for the “defence of Canada”. It did vote on the

state of war with Italy, but not at all regarding Japan, Hungary, Romania and Finland.

In the case of Korea, the sending of troops to Korea was debated in the House but no resolution was offered and of course there was no vote. In response to a question in the House on September 8, 1950, the then prime minister stated about a resolution authorizing the sending of troops:

No, sir; that would be something which has never been done. The Government announces to Parliament what its policy is, and asks Parliament for the ways and means to carry it out. It is for that reason that we have our appropriations bill. If Parliament does not authorize the ways and means to carry out the policy, it cannot be carried out.

The order in council putting troops on active service in Korea was tabled in the House on September 9, 1950, but was not voted on. An appropriations bill for defence was tabled and voted on later and that is how the policy took place.

In the case of the gulf war, the government announced the deployment of troops and ships on August 10, 1990, prior to a September 15 order in council placing the troops on active service. At that time Parliament was not sitting. Parliament did not reconvene until September 24, at which time it debated a government motion and there was a debate at that time and a vote. A modified version of the motion calling for a “further resolution...in the event of the outbreak of hostilities” involving Canada was adopted on October 23.

In November 1990, there was a debate and a vote on a motion supporting the UN Security Council, and in January a debate and a vote on a motion to reaffirm that support took place. However, it should be noted that Canadian troops were already engaged in air strikes by the time the motion was adopted on January 22, 1991.

[*Translation*]

During the Kosovo crisis, the government consulted Parliament on a regular basis. So, a number of take note debates have been held. It was the same thing with Afghanistan.

We had debates here in Parliament.

[*English*]

Let us see what was done elsewhere. The Australian example has been used in the House. The Australian House of Representatives has begun a take note debate on Iraq. To date there has been no vote by the Australian house. That is simply not so. Like our own Prime Minister, Prime Minister Howard said that he would prefer a second UN resolution if military action were undertaken at all, not at all the way that is depicted either.

Let us talk about the text of the motion. Let us remember that in the House a few moments ago an hon. member said that he would take the Prime Minister up on his offer, that if he can guarantee that he will schedule the official opposition allotted day the day after the government makes a decision to involve Canadian troops, then they will withdraw their motion right here and right now. The motion has not been withdrawn and the Prime Minister has answered yes.

**An hon. member:** Do it in writing.

**Hon. Don Boudria:** The hon. member across says to do it in writing. The Prime Minister has done it on the floor of the House in front of all Canadians.

I think what we are hearing here is that the government offered yes as an answer, and the opposition was not prepared to hear yes and now it cannot deal with it. That is the problem.

Now let us deal with the flaws in the motion itself. The first flaw—

**An hon. member:** Wouldn't let us vote on Tuesday.

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Yes, we will. We will have two votes, on Thursday.

The first flaw is that it proposes a process that is already in place. As I said, under existing procedures there is a virtually weekly opportunity, and in this one there would be the next day, because it has been promised by the Prime Minister and repeated by me, on the next sitting day of course.

In other words, the motion is unnecessary. The member says the next day. It is fine for a member to suggest that Parliament could be recalled the next day. It is fine to suggest that for members who live in Toronto, Montreal and perhaps in Vancouver, who could get here. Does the member for Yukon not have the same rights? Does the member for Labrador not have the same rights? Are all members not equal here? Do they not all have the same right to participate in a debate? I challenge the hon. members: I believe that they do.

The second flaw in the motion is even worse and that is the wording of the motion. The premise of the motion is that the government will take a decision to involve Canada in the particularly described military action, that being war against Iraq.

I am not prepared to say that today. I am not prepared to have my name stand by a motion that says that the House concurs in the decision by the government regarding Canada's involvement in military action to disarm Saddam Hussein. I am not prepared to agree with that right now. What would happen tomorrow if we did agree with that right now? Who would run to Washington with it from right across the way and say our government has already decided, that it is in the motion that we passed in the House? That is what they would say tomorrow. That is too cute by half.

We will not presuppose that the government has already announced that which it has not already announced. I, for one, am willing to give peace another chance.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs made it clear this morning that the government is not committed to such a military participation. Hopefully it never will be, but we do not know that yet. However, if this motion were to be adopted, as I said with its underlying presupposition that the government will take such a decision, those who put the motion will doubtlessly claim that the adoption of the motion constitutes a direction by the House to the government to commit itself to military action. In other words—

**An hon. member:** Nonsense.

**Hon. Don Boudria:** If those across the way say this is nonsense, let them withdraw their motion the way they said in exchange for

### *Supply*

getting the floor the next sitting day after such a deployment, heaven forbid that there would be one. Let them do that. It was their offer. They do not want it anymore. We know why they would not. It is because they want a positive vote on the motion so they can use it to the ends that they have already identified. I do not want to be a part of that. I am surprised that anyone in the House would vote for that motion as worded.

• (1535)

We are willing to give the undertaking for the next sitting day to have an opposition day. We are willing to do that. That is going further than people have done before, in a long, long time, but that is a very different thing than presupposing that the House concur in the decision by the government regarding Canada's involvement in military action to disarm Saddam Hussein.

There is another thing wrong with this.

[*Translation*]

In six months or in a year, if there were no large-scale military operation, the deployment of two, three, four or six soldiers on a peacekeeping mission in Iraq would be governed by that motion, because it will still be in effect.

They could have taken an additional 15 minutes to think about this motion before writing it. Or they could withdraw it now, not at the request of the government, but at the request of the opposition, and I mentioned the hon. member who proposed this motion. Unfortunately for him, he got a yes to a question, when he expected a no.

In my opinion, and in the government's opinion, we must vote against this motion. We do not want to give any indication that, today, we are ready for a military invasion. That is not the government's position. We will wait for the report of Mr. Blix. We will give peace a chance.

I am not saying that there will never be a military intervention. I am praying that there is never one in this case. This is my hope. And I will definitely not give anyone an opportunity to raise the bar the way some would wish to do today.

• (1540)

[*English*]

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I really wish that the hon. House leader for the government would have taken the time to read the motion properly. He is picking out one piece of the motion and trying to pretend that it is what the vote would be on, the next vote that we are having, the actual motion, and that is not the case at all.

As for his taking us up on our offer, let us understand this very clearly. The problem is that the Prime Minister said yes, if we will withdraw our motion he will guarantee that we have a votable opposition day the next sitting day. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure out that if the government happened to send our troops to Iraq in support of our allies at the start of the March break, and if it happened to be a very short altercation, hopefully, by the time the two week break was over what would be the point in having a debate and a vote? We are not going to fall for that: It is the next day after the decision is taken, not the next sitting day.

### Supply

The hon. member went on at some length about the history of votes on military intervention by our country. He went back to World War II and the Korean war, but let us talk about something a little more recent. I will quote from *Hansard* of January 17, 1991, regarding Canada's participation in the gulf war:

Had we been asked the appropriate question, which is of course should Canada go or not go to war, I would have nevertheless voted against it. But I think I had a right and my constituents had a right to have that fundamental question posed and to have all of us speak on the question that should have been before Parliament.

That was what the hon. member said in 1991. Why does he not stand up now and vote for the motion so that all MPs can have a vote on this important issue?

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Let us try and reason this with the hon. member a little. He is saying, let us have a vote about us having another vote, the other vote to be about a motion worded today about something that may or may not happen in the future, but the text of which is determined today, about a particular military action that they are identifying today which may not even happen, let alone happen in another form. That is what is being asked for from across the way right now. Canadians, I think, will understand what they are asking.

Not only that, but when it was realized earlier today that this is a flawed process, which no doubt it was, otherwise why would they have put the proposition, an officer of the House, the whip of the official opposition, said that if the Prime Minister can guarantee that we will schedule the official opposition—but of course the scheduling does not involve the official opposition, we schedule, and it is up to the opposition members to sort that out among themselves—an allotted day the day after the government makes the decision—

**Mr. Jay Hill:** The day after. Not the sitting day.

**Hon. Don Boudria:** But that is the scheduling. It does not take place that day. The debate is the day the House sits.

In any case, he is saying the day after the government makes a decision to involve Canadian troops, and then they will withdraw their motion right here, right now. That was almost an hour ago and it has not happened. Clearly there was no intention to withdraw that motion under any circumstances. There was an intention to get the text of a motion that presupposes a military participation adopted by the House today. That is the purpose. It is clear. Otherwise they would have withdrawn it, and there is still time.

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to watch the high energy and the passion with which this debate is taking place over procedure and the back and forth as the government and the opposition try to outmanoeuvre each other as usual.

Surely both parties are missing the point here, which is that Canadians expect us to have a debate and a vote. There are 301 members of Parliament who are here in this place to conduct a democratic exercise, and to have that democratic exercise and a vote before a decision is made.

That is what I would like to put to the government House leader. Why is the government so afraid of having this vote take place before that decision is made? We have heard about hypothetical

situations. There is a precedent in the House of Commons, Kosovo for example, where debate and a vote took place before there was a decision made. Why can that not happen today? I ask the hon. member that question because that is really the crux of the matter here.

• (1545)

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, that is a difficult question for me to answer. I am being asked why the motion proposed by the official opposition and amended by another opposition party does not contain the words the hon. member thinks it should contain. She is asking that the words should have read “before deployment”.

The government, of course, does not write the motions for opposition days. Perhaps we could volunteer our services. I have a feeling there would probably be some disagreement on the other side if we attempted to do that.

That is not what is being asked. The official opposition and, if I understand it correctly, the Bloc Québécois through its amendment are not asking that either. They are asking that we identify now the specific theme of the motion, that it be deemed moved and seconded, which presumes that the person moving the motion today would also move the proposition on that day and that it occur after the deployment.

The proposition raised by the hon. member, and it is an interesting one I suppose, is not before the House.

**Mr. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to speak to the perilous situation in Iraq because of the consequences it could have for Canadians everywhere. This situation is perilous to the stability in the Middle East. It is perilous to the lives of innocent people. This is a serious debate, as are the consequences.

We should think of the possibility of one of our close friends or loved ones being killed, maimed, or hospitalized for life. This could be the result of us taking the wrong action in this perilous Iraq situation. The question would be, how would happen? Would it be a relative in the armed forces fighting in Iraq? Would it be a weapon brought here by a terrorist, given to him by Iraq, that we did not harness? Would it be a terrorist attack from an Islamic extremist from another country inflamed by an attack on Iraq?

In one respect this is the easiest issue I have ever dealt with in my riding. At the time I wrote these remarks 100% of the constituents who had contacted me were against going to war unilaterally at this time given the evidence that has been presented.

**An hon. member:** Was that both of them?

**Mr. Larry Bagnell:** Since that time, about that many have come on side and actually think we should go to war with Iraq, perhaps three or four out of the 30,000 constituents.

I have made it clear in the House and across the country in the *National Post* of the aversion of Yukoners toward going to war with Iraq at this time. I have just returned from a security conference in Asia and once again I made it clear to the 16 leading nations of the world gathered there that Yukoners had no appetite for going to war unilaterally with the United States at this time, based on the evidence that has been presented.

What do we want to do in the future, with future conditions and future situations? What we do not want is a weapon supplied by a despotic regime in Iraq taken to Canada and unleashed from a suitcase. What we do not want is a tyrannical Saddam Hussein to destabilize the Middle East with theft, terrorism, mayhem and aggression.

The important question of whether to go or not to go would be answered by the answers to the following question. What is the greatest present danger to peace in this world? Is it even in Iraq? What about Zimbabwe and the genocide in Africa? What about the nuclear threat in North Korea? What about the 400 missiles presently aimed at Taiwan and increasing every year that could totally destabilize Asia? What about al-Qaeda and its connected organizations around the world? What about the 20,000 nuclear warheads left over in 120 sites all over Asia after the breakup of the Soviet Union?

As perhaps chess grandmasters do, we should think about the moves ahead and their potential consequences. What about the countries that we will overrun in an invasion on Iraq? What would we feel like if some country overran part of Canada on its way to another war? What about the countries adjacent to Iraq, within its missile range? Why are they not all on side in a coalition to attack Iraq? If the people who are most threatened by the possibility of the aggression of Iraq, which is quite weakened at this time, are not on side, why would we be, an ocean away?

When a lot of the world is this strongly against a unilateral action against Iraq with the present evidence, we should think of the dangers of inflaming and giving ammunition to hundreds of terrorists in those Islamic radical groups and we should think of those radical groups inflaming, infiltrating and performing terrorist acts in Canada.

• (1550)

We should think of the over 100 million presently very peaceful Indian Muslims in India and the Middle East, or the Islamic world being inflamed by western aggression on Iraq without sufficient evidence, or Arab governments that are presently on our side fighting the war against terrorism with us. We certainly have not been totally successful yet. When those regimes that are in a tender balance, such as Pakistan, crumble because of the ammunition that we give them without sufficient evidence for invading Iraq, they will once again become havens for terrorist groups that can then train and perform acts of aggression comparable to September 11.

I want us to contemplate the following scenario. Let us say we send our troops into Iraq, the 150,000 troops that are presently heading that way, and they surround the millions of people in Baghdad. In the middle of Baghdad is Saddam Hussein, the dictator, the aggressor, the sadistic killer, with his palace guard surrounded by thousands and thousands of innocent civilians. What exactly will we do in that situation? It would be very hard to retreat and have any credibility, but when the only option is to wage an attack and thousands and thousands of innocent civilians are at risk, what are the consequences, what do we gain, and is that the most dangerous threat to peace in the world at this time?

The last point I would like to make in deference to my constituents who I try to represent is to relate two stories. First, a young couple came into my office with two small children who said they never go

### *Supply*

to their MP's office because they are not the type of people who are very political. They were upset and were trying to explain the situation to their children. For the future of their children, they wanted to ensure their MP knew that they did not believe it was right at this time to engage in aggression with Iraq.

Second, I was at a reception about 10 days ago and an elderly lady told me that she had four grandchildren who were similar in age to the Canadian military people who could be going to Iraq at this time or in the very near future should we join in aggressive action. She was virtually in tears because she thought this was unnecessary, there was no proven reason to do this, and it would not enhance the security of Canadians.

Based on all of this I would ask the people who will ultimately make the very serious decision for all Canadians to think carefully of all of these ramifications. We should think of the detailed ramifications around the world, including the Islamic world, and where there could be bad consequences from any action. We should focus on how to preserve the health of Canadians and what would be best for the most innocent people in the world.

• (1555)

**Mrs. Betty Hinton (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, that was an interesting speech and I am sure it was very heartfelt.

On behalf of the Canadian Alliance I attend the Council of Europe where I heard firsthand testimony from a Kurdish woman who explained what had happened in her country with Saddam Hussein using chemical warfare against his neighbours as a test. During this test there were many people killed, but worse than the killing was the fact that it changed the DNA of those survivors for the rest of their lives. The result included spontaneous abortions and many birth defects. There were also other worse things that happened to these people. Although they still walk, they are dead. Their DNA has been changed forever and their history has been wiped out.

Would the member who has just spoken concur with me that war is the last thing we want as a country, but we have an obligation to the people we represent to ensure that everything remains stable, safe and secure for Canadians. Would he concur that the best way to do that with a man like Saddam Hussein, who earned the name "the butcher", is to stand with our allies and make it clear without any question that we will make him do what the UN has asked him to do, and if he does not, we are prepared to back that up with force?

**Mr. Larry Bagnell:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's thoughtful, insightful and important question adds very much to today's debate. Her eloquent comments and her excellent question allow me to elaborate on the points I did not have time to outline.

*Supply*

Saddam Hussein has used these weapons not only on his neighbours but also on his own people. Over 220,000 people have been killed. People are constantly arbitrarily imprisoned in his jails. People are murdered and tortured. Everyone in the House agrees there is evidence of all that. He should be stopped from doing what he is doing. Many of his own people want that. In theory, we had hoped that his own people would cause a change, but they may not.

I was delighted to hear the member say that war is the last thing we should do. I am not a pacifist. I am not opposed to war. I am very proud of the times when Canada had to go to war to preserve peace, such as in the second world war. I agree with the member that war should be the last thing to do.

I do not think we have comprehensively outlined sufficient alternatives. With mild abrogation of the measures in resolution 1441, what steps have we outlined before war? What have we said we would do, opposed to killing innocent people? What are the steps we would take to resolve this and to put pressure on that regime to come up with a peaceful solution and other mechanisms? What are some creative alternative solutions? Hopefully in this and further debates on Iraq some people will come up with solutions.

I agree with the member that it will be a last resort if more evidence turns up that there is credible danger to Canadians and more harm will be done by not using military force. I have listened to the options put forward from around the world and doing this at the wrong time could cause destabilization of millions of people around the world. I do not think the world should take inappropriate action at this time.

• (1600)

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the member for Yukon did not adequately reply to my colleague's quite thoughtful question. I think the gist of her question was what he would advocate we do to reinforce United Nations resolution 1441. He never adequately answered what he proposes to do, other than to say that we should come up with some innovative thinking. The world community has tried sanctions against that country and that despot for 11 years. It has not worked.

Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Elk Island.

Let me state very clearly for the record that I am not advocating war. No Canadian in their right mind wants a war, but the dithering of the government on the issue of supporting our allies and backing up United Nations resolution 1441 with a real and credible threat of serious consequences is nothing short of reprehensible.

The subject matter we are debating today could not be more timely, given United States Secretary of State Colin Powell's address to the United Nations Security Council yesterday. In his speech he brought forward new evidence that condemns the Iraqi leader for consistently deceiving, and more important not complying with, the United Nations demands for a transparent, unhindered inspection process under resolution 1441.

Our present situation is a culmination of several difficult years of the world working to disarm Iraq and free the Iraqi people of a hostile military dictator. Since the end of the Persian Gulf war in

1991, the United Nations has imposed sanctions on Iraq in an effort to disarm the nation of weapons of mass destruction. To achieve this objective, UN weapons inspectors were sent to Iraq to monitor the demolition of all Iraqi weapons. In 1998 Iraqi authorities refused to provide any further co-operation with UN inspectors which led to their eventual evacuation from the region.

This turning point has led to consistent non-compliance with the demands of the world through the United Nations over the years. All the while we have begrudgingly made do with trade sanctions and the hope that the situation would not escalate. By the member for Yukon's comments, I think it is still the position of the Liberal government that we are hoping that something will happen.

However, in light of recent events, specifically the horrific events of September 11, we can no longer live with the continuous threat of possible attacks from any terrorist group or threatening nation. Although Canada, along with the United States, has worked to improve our collective national security, we must complement this effort by neutralizing any global terrorist threats.

Many countries around the world have had a longstanding confrontation with Iraq. Saddam Hussein has been unapologetic for his disdain of civilized nations, even his own people. Since the removal of UN weapons inspectors in 1998, it has been widely suspected that the Iraqi government was restoring its weapons programs in order to replenish its supply of weapons of mass destruction. The new evidence brought forward by the U.S. secretary of state has confirmed our suspicions. These covert activities simply are not acceptable and must stop.

On November 8, 2002 the United Nations Security Council made one last attempt to provide Iraq's leadership with one more opportunity to peacefully resolve this situation. In passing resolution 1441, the UN sent a very clear message to Saddam Hussein with five primary demands: one, declare all of Iraq's activities related to the development of chemical, biological and nuclear and ballistic missiles; two, provide full and unhindered access to all facilities suspected of producing weapons or biological agents and related documents or records for UN weapons inspectors; three, provide a list of all personnel associated with weapons programs; four, allow private interviews by inspectors without the presence of Iraqi officials; and five, allow unrestricted aircraft reconnaissance by the UN.

To date, Iraq has failed to fully comply with all of these demands. We know this. Although the United Nations chief weapons inspector, Hans Blix, has yet to make his final report on the matter, we already know from his interim report to the Security Council that Iraq's co-operation up to now has been unsatisfactory.

• (1605)

If there is one thing history can teach us about Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, it is that we cannot expect him to follow UN demands to immediately disarm if we do not back them up with severe consequences for non-compliance.

The most recent UN resolution and the many before it since the gulf war state quite clearly that Iraq must disarm or face consequences. These consequences must be backed up with action from UN member countries. It is only with this threat of force we can ever hope to have Iraq peacefully disarm. Our current situation is a true test of the United Nations and everything that it has come to represent.

Before the United Nations was created, a similar organization, the League of Nations, existed to fulfill a similar role of facilitating international co-operation. As some may recall, at the urging of Britain and the United States, the league was created at the end of World War I, the so-called war to end all wars, as a means of preventing another world conflict. A league covenant was agreed to by member countries outlining the principles of collective security through the use of arbitration in international disputes, reductions of armaments and open diplomacy.

Throughout the 1920s the league was effective in settling minor international disputes. However, it never received any serious challenges to its authority until the 1930s.

The League of Nations could no longer fulfill its mandate of preventing world aggression because it could not back up agreements with action for non-compliance. The evidence of this was the Japanese expansion into Manchuria and China, Italy's conquest of Ethiopia and Hitler's outright repudiation of the Versailles treaty.

In the days leading up to World War II, the prime ministers of France and Britain negotiated the Munich Pact in 1938 in an effort to appease the dictators Hitler and Mussolini. In exchange for no further territorial demands, Germany was allowed to reoccupy the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia. After the negotiations, British Prime Minister Chamberlain returned to London and declared the now infamous "peace in our time". Shortly thereafter we learned this was not the case.

We must remember these lessons we have learned throughout history when dealing with Iraq. Many countries around the world have worked together to give more credence to the consequences for defying the UN resolutions. In spite of this the Liberal government has remained steadfast in its position of having no position on Iraq, nor has it shown any willingness to work with our allies. This is truly sad.

Canada should be continuing its tradition of peace building by working to resolve the situation with our allies, the United States, Britain, Australia, Spain and many more. Yet the Prime Minister is continuing with his usual trait of doing nothing to avoid offending anyone. The unfortunate casualty of his actions is true national leadership for Canadians.

Deciding on matters as serious as a potential war is not easy. People do not like war. People do not want war. However, people recognize that sometimes it is necessary to maintain global security.

The Iraqi government knows this. In the past few months there has been quite a bit of posturing in the media from Saddam Hussein in an attempt to win over public opinion.

### *Supply*

This week in fact the Iraqi leader granted his first sit down interview in more than a decade. Never before have we seen this from a hostile rogue nation so clearly trying to deceive the world.

Colin Powell's presentation yesterday provides irrefutable evidence that Iraq has deliberately deceived and hampered weapons inspections and that Iraq has no intention of disarming.

From eyewitness accounts to satellite imagery, the chilling and sometimes graphic evidence presented constitutes a material breach of UN Security Council resolution 1441. However, we must wait for the final report from the chief UN weapons inspector on February 14 before this is officially confirmed.

Either way, Canada should resolve to work with our allies to ensure that Saddam Hussein disarms peacefully, or failing that, initiate the serious consequences as indicated in resolution 1441.

Let me be very clear about the motion we are debating because of some comments earlier. We are not debating the merits of military action against Iraq, even though I have touched on some of the arguments that are out there. Our supply day motion is about providing the House of Commons with the opportunity to have a vote on the matter.

#### • (1610)

At the end of the day we will be voting on whether Canadians should be given the opportunity to be heard by allowing their elected representatives to individually express their support or their opposition on behalf of their constituents.

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member watched the President of the United States in January 2002 give a speech. In that speech he used the phrase "axis of evil" and he described Iraq, Iran and North Korea as being the axis of evil.

After he gets done with Iraq, will he support similar action against Iran and North Korea?

**Mr. Jay Hill:** Mr. Speaker, first and foremost we have to deal with the immediate threat before us.

It seems to me that the Liberal government has been using this as a smokescreen. It is saying that we cannot go after one despot, no matter how much of a threat he poses to global peace and security and no matter how much evidence there is. It does not make sense because perhaps North Korea, with its nuclear capability, is more of a threat. Maybe we should do something about it.

There is no resolution currently before the UN about North Korea. There is no resolution about China or Taiwan or other countries that the parliamentary secretary might want to mention. We are dealing with Iraq. We are dealing with our support of the United Nations.

I outlined in my speech one of the biggest problems with doing nothing. History taught us with the League of Nations that if countries were not prepared to stand up and be counted then the United Nations would fall apart.

*Supply*

The Liberal government, by its dithering and failing to stand with our allies, Britain, Australia, Spain and the United States, and by failing to make that clear is doing more to destroy the credibility of the United Nations than anything else.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's message. I am really glad he brought September 11 back into the picture. We seem to forget that from time to time.

I would love to have time to speak to this issue but there will not be time for me. I have a lot of concern about war. I do not want war. Nobody wants war. Nobody in my riding wants war.

I have a son who is in Kuwait city at this moment. He is stationed there with the military of the United States, and I am extremely proud that George Bush and Colin Powell are his commanding officers. That makes me feel a lot more comfortable than some of the other things I hear.

We cannot negotiate with Saddam. This has been mentioned a hundred times. We cannot negotiate with a man who has been known to be a murderous tyrant on a number of occasions. We know what kind of a human being he is.

One thing really bothers me. I have heard what the members of the New Democratic Party have said in the House. Just the other night in the take note debate when I tried to intervene, they shouted that there was no difference between George Bush and Saddam Hussein. The anti-American sentiment I have heard from across the way is far too ridiculous. I am proud to hear that the deputy leader of the Liberals has asked them to cool down. I happen to think the Americans make pretty good neighbours. I am not sure who else I would want for a neighbour and I am not sure who the NDP would want for a neighbour other than who we have.

That kind of condemnation of the President of the United States is absolutely outrageous and our country should not even venture into that. We need to stand together with our allies and we need to get a message to murderous people like Saddam Hussein that this has to come to an end.

What does the member say to people in the House who make those kinds of remarks?

•(1615)

**Mr. Jay Hill:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Wild Rose has a hugely personal stake in this. As a parent, I cannot imagine the anguish and emotion he is dealing with having his son stationed over there and knowing he may be going to war at any time.

The message I would give to members like that is a lesson that we have learned through history: united we stand, divided we fall.

September 11 was an attack on all of us. Canadians died there. Canadian families are suffering because of that terrorist action. We cannot allow that to happen again.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for sharing his time with me.

When I listened to different members express their points of view, I thought about of analogy I could use to help illustrate the issue here today. The real question is whether we will hold the Liberal

government, under the Prime Minister, fully accountable its decision with respect to the involvement of Canadian troops in any possible attack on Iraq. We have to think about why we are here.

Here is the analogy I thought of and it happens to be a true story. It happened only a couple of years ago and for obvious reasons, I will not give the House any names.

A young lady was found to be very attractive to a certain young man. He started hanging around her house. This young lady happened to have three brothers, all of whom were substantial in size, football size quality, and had a way of imposing their presence. They were a little concerned about this young man who was trying to court their sister so they came up with a plan.

These young fellows happened to have a very nice little sports car. The next time this young courting visitor came around, they took him for a ride in the car. The three brothers and the young man, who was trying to edge his way into the family, all took a drive in the car. Lo and behold it did not take long for them to end up out in the country.

These three young men did not intend to do any harm to this young man, but they wanted to give him a very strong message. They stopped the car and got out. They were looking under the hood at the motor and so on. They arranged it so that suddenly this young man, who was quite thin, found himself surrounded by the three rather burly sized guys. They simply looked at him and told him that they knew he was after their sister and if he hurt her in any way, he would regret it. They wanted to make the point very clear that they were there to protect their sister. This is a true story, but I am just not telling members who it is. However I there is a happy ending to this story.

This young man realized full well that he had some really strict rules to obey during the courtship time, and it worked out fine. Today they are a happily married couple and the boys like their new brother-in-law. There was a time when he was considered a threat and without doing anything bad the boys made sure he received a clear message.

We have a similar situation with Saddam Hussein. From all we can tell, he is a guy intent on doing some pretty serious evil in various parts of the world, particularly the free world. That is in his plans for the future. We know he has already done some pretty dastardly things in the past, and I will get to those.

The point right now is that we need to have a bunch of allies surround him, stand close to him, look him right in the eye and tell him that if he touches us there will be big consequences. The outcome hopefully will be that he will back off, agree with the United Nations inspectors and give them total freedom to work in his country, to take away his offensive arms and his ability to produce them, thereby ensuring safety for his people as well as for people around the world. That is the objective I wish we could achieve, and it has been mentioned here before.



I do not think members in the House would say that they ought to support George Bush and that they would go in and attack someone. Neither George Bush, nor the Americans, nor Canadians nor the British are schoolyard bullies. They are the big brothers saying not to touch their sister. That is what we are saying to Saddam Hussein. He has done enough to his people. He has threatened the rest of the world. We are saying that we will not let him get away with it and that we will take away his ability to do it.

• (1620)

I need to emphasize that this person is a real threat. Just think of a few things he has done. He unilaterally attacked Kuwait. At that stage everybody said that the Americans were only going there to defend it because of the oil source. Frankly, I do not believe that. I think the Americans and Canadians together have that capacity to match maybe 85% or 90% of the oil output that comes from that part of the world. We have it almost in Alberta, if we were to develop the tar sands in our part of the country. I do not believe that it is just about oil. I think it is about freedom of people not to be attacked by neighbours who are belligerent. I think that is why the Americans went in there to protect Kuwait and free it.

What did Saddam Hussein do when he was driven out of there? I suppose the images burned into all our minds are of the oil wells burning. They would still be burning if it were not for American know-how and the personnel and equipment which went in to shut the wells down. That is the kind of an irresponsible person with whom we are dealing.

We think of the Kurds that he gassed, as an experiment almost. That puts Hitler and Saddam Hussein into the same category. Hitler also did experiments on humans. We look back in history now and say that stopping Hitler when we did was almost too late, it should have been done earlier.

Of the evidence I have that tells me Saddam is a nasty man and not to be trusted, the one that gets me the closest is the way in which he dealt with his own family. First, we need to recognize that there were I think four sons-in-law, husbands of Saddam's daughters, who said that Saddam was bad and they would have to inform the rest of the world about him. They took a huge risk doing that. No matter where they were in the world, they knew they would be a target. They left the country and began to talk publicly about the danger he was to the rest of the world.

Saddam Hussein sent a message to them and asked them to come home because he missed them. He said that he missed his daughters and he loved and missed his grandchildren. He said that he had forgiven them. Those were the words and commitments he made to his daughters. What happened when they returned home? He killed them. Some reports said that he personally shot his sons-in-law, the fathers of his grandchildren. To have any meaningful conversation and say that what we ought to do is to negotiate with this guy to me defies understanding. He is a guy who has to be surrounded.

What is the motion about today? Part of my job is to help members on both sides of the House vote in favour of the motion. Every one of us here can vote in favour of the motion, regardless on what side we are. We acknowledge that it would be an executive decision to declare war and to commit our troops to that war.

### *Supply*

We acknowledge that the government will make that decision, with or without a vote. We wish that there would be a debate and vote beforehand. Given that there will not be, we are saying that the government should be held accountable. The day after, or as soon as possible if the House is not sitting, we want the members of Parliament to have the freedom to stand up and vote on a motion which would say that the House concurred in the decision by the government regarding Canada's involvement in military action to disarm Saddam Hussein.

• (1625)

Regardless of which side the members are on, they have the opportunity, with this motion, to vote on it. Our motion today is simply a way of assuring that such a vote will take place the day after, or as soon thereafter as possible if the House is not sitting, according to the amendment. In that way we would be able to tell the government whether it has the support and the concurrence of the House in the decision it has made.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I must say that I find it discouraging, and I think a lot of Canadians do as well, that we would feel the need to spend a lot of time in the House stating and restating that Saddam Hussein is a dangerous despot and a despicable dictator. I do not think there are any differences of opinions in the House on that point. It is very important to be clear about that.

What is deeply disturbing and what is very important for us to remember is the position that has been expressed by too many members of the House, particularly the official opposition, that would suggest that any informed critiquing of the Bush administration's current policies and proposed actions is somehow inherently anti-American.

Let me ask the member if he is aware that a couple of weeks ago, in the context of the NDP leadership convention in Toronto, a very courageous man and woman appeared who were part of the formation of an organization in the U.S. called Military Families Speak Out. This couple has a 23 year old son in the U.S. marines who is in the Persian Gulf and is being prepared to enter a war in Iraq. They were here to plead with Canadians not to misrepresent the situation in the U.S., the notion that somehow to critique the madness of the current Bush administration's policies is to be anti-American.

Can the member not recognize and can he not persuade his colleagues to recognize that there are many facts that are being ignored by George Bush and Colin Powell? In fact, in his speech yesterday he utterly and totally ignored the testimony of Hans Blix who has actively and openly disagreed with the assertions that were being made yesterday by Colin Powell.

Can the member not recognize the difference between some kind of knee-jerk anti-Americanism and some kind of informed critique of the particular facts and the particular policies that cause concern for a great many people in the world today?

**Mr. Ken Epp:** Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the hon. member greatly weakens her argument when she begins with the *ad hominem* attack on the President of the United States by calling him a madman. I do not know how she can do that.

### *Supply*

She is appealing to me and other members here to have a rational debate based upon investigation of the facts, which I am prepared to do and which I think most members here are prepared to do, but she seems to have already made up her mind that any evidence to the contrary is simply as that seen through the eyes of a madman. She has jumped to the conclusion prematurely.

We should look at all the evidence. It seems to me that the evidence is rather overwhelming. I mentioned some of it with respect to the personality of Saddam Hussein himself, but as far the evidence of the presence of the weapons and the ability to create them, there is a lot of evidence there.

The member must take into account and remember that a lot of evidence has been presented, but we can count on the fact that the Americans have much more evidence that they cannot disclose because it could weaken the protection of their own troops or their own people if in fact war does become inevitable, which it appears as if it will be because this man will not just say that he is giving up. He will keep on with his plan and he will need to be stopped for the security of all nations in the world.

• (1630)

**Ms. Alexa McDonough:** Mr. Speaker, I think it is a known fact that Hans Blix has made it clear that the UNMOVIC inspectors have seen no evidence of mobile biological weapons labs, no persuasive indications of Iraq—al-Qaeda links, no evidence of Iraq hiding and moving material used for weapons of mass destruction and on and on.

I ask the hon. member this again. Can he not recognize that it is not somehow anti-American to critique the madness of current policies?

He will see that the record does not show that I have called the President of the United States a madman. However I have no hesitation saying that the policies being pursued and the policies uncritically being embraced by this government are policies that simply fail to deal with the facts and are very much caught up in rhetoric that is posing a danger to the future of humanity

**Mr. Ken Epp:** Mr. Speaker, as we saw yesterday in the evidence presented, the military of Iraq is taking all sorts of measures to make sure that the inspectors are not finding the evidence; the smoking gun so to speak, the actual evidence. It is moving it and making sure that it is hidden. The evidence given yesterday showed that was what it was doing. Of course Hans Blix and the inspectors have not found it because it is being moved around.

I think we ought to commend the Americans for saying that notwithstanding that, they will dig right down and ferret down to the truth. Is this why the evidence is not appearing? Is it because of the fact that they are moving it?

I believe the secretary of state, in his television address to the United Nations, gave adequate reasons for us to believe that there is material there that is being moved. I at least was convinced of it and I am very much against war. I wish it were not so but it is staring me in the face.

**Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Scarborough East.

On this very important topic, I think we should state where Canadians are. Canadians know that the world is a dangerous place. They are very proud of their contributions in the past to pursuing peace, to securing peace and to keeping the peace.

With rumours of war circulating at the present time, they are now trying to evaluate the news of each day against their own memories of history and measure it against their own life experiences and their own set of values. I think they remain skeptical about war in general as a solution to problems and I think they remain concerned about the unintended consequences of war, consequences which many of our own citizens in this country have experienced in the past in their home countries.

Those who have personal experience with war, report that war is primarily not about victory or defeat. War is about destruction. War is about death.

Right now the citizens of Iraq, 25 million of them, feel like they are under a death sentence. Each passing day seems to bring them closer to a war in which tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of them will die.

The U.S. military strategy for Iraq is called shock and awe, and involves dropping 300 to 400 cruise missiles each day for two consecutive days. That is more than twice the number of missiles launched during the entire gulf war which lasted 40 days.

On January 27 the military strategist who designed this strategy called shock and awe told CBS News “We want them to quit, not to fight, so you have an effect rather like the nuclear weapons at Hiroshima, not taking days or weeks but only minutes”.

He went on to say “the sheer size of this has never been seen before, never been contemplated before. There will be not one safe place in Baghdad”.

If there is a war, this will be the military strategy. I ask my colleagues, does Canada want to be part of an attack on a city full of civilians in which there will truly be no safe place?

Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War have predicted that 500,000 Iraqis could die in this war. The United Nations own task force predicts that 100,000 Iraqis could be wounded and 400,000 hit by disease after the bombing of water and sewage facilities and the disruption of food supplies. They predict that at least 900,000 Iraqi refugees will go to Iran and that two million people could be displaced from their homes within the country. They have not even tried to establish figures for those who may go to Kuwait, Turkey, Syria or Jordan.

This is the true face of war: dead people, maimed people, starving people and thirsty people driven from their homes; miserable refugees searching for a safe place.

I am stating these unpleasant predictions from experts because yesterday on television I heard a financial analyst suggest that the volatility of the financial markets is due to the global uncertainty about war on Iraq. Having stated that position, he said “Maybe we should just get it over with”. Did he know that meant killing perhaps hundreds of thousands of people so that our financial markets could become stable? How convenient that would be for us; how inconvenient for Iraqis.

•(1635)

I do not really blame him because our North American vision of war from a distance and as seen on CNN has skewed our perception of war. We see explosions in the distance. We see lights in the night sky. All this explosion business is followed by some healthy looking North American analyst claiming success. I guess it depends on a person's definition of success.

The military strategist I referred to earlier recently wrote that one way to shock and awe Saddam Hussein is to remind him that the U. S. has "certain weapons" that can destroy deeply buried facilities. That sentence is not even a thinly veiled reference to the newest kind of nuclear weapons, the B-61 bunker busters. *Los Angeles Times* columnist William Arkin has confirmed that the U.S. is preparing to use nuclear bunker busters against Iraq. Senator Kennedy, after hearing this news last week, wrote in the *Times*:

A dangerous world just grew more dangerous. Reports that the administration is contemplating the pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons in Iraq should set off alarm bells that this could not only be the wrong war at the wrong time, but it could quickly spin out of control.

Initiating the use of nuclear weapons would make a conflict with Iraq potentially catastrophic.

Why? Because:

Nuclear weapons are in a class of their own for good reasons.... They have been kept separate from other military alternatives out of a profound commitment to do all we can to see that they are never used again.... It makes no sense to break down the firewall that has existed for half a century between nuclear conflict and any other form of warfare.

By raising the possibility that nuclear weapons could be part of a first strike against Iraq, the American administration would be letting the nuclear genie out of the bottle.

This policy [would] deepen(s) the danger of nuclear proliferation by, in effect, telling non-nuclear states that nuclear weapons are necessary to deter a potential U.S. attack and by sending a green light to the world's nuclear states that it is permissible to use them. Is this the lesson we want to send to North Korea, Pakistan and India or any other nuclear power?

The use of nuclear weapons in Iraq in the absence of an imminent, overwhelming threat to... national security would bring a near-total breakdown in relations between the U.S. and the rest of the world. At a minimum, it would lead to a massive rise in anti-Americanism in the Arab world and a corresponding increase in sympathy for terrorists who seek to do us harm.

The senator concludes by saying, "Our nation"—meaning the U. S.—"long a beacon of hope, would overnight be seen as a symbol of death, destruction and aggression".

These reports of the pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons are very disturbing. They force me to ask: Do Canadians want to be part of an attack through which the principle we have upheld for 50 years, that is, of holding back nuclear weapons is broken? It is a principle which has served the world well.

I speak today because I want my colleagues and all Canadians to face the realities of war, the realities for the people of Iraq and the people of their region. I want us all to consider the repercussions on the global community, on the struggle against terrorism, on the future recruitment of terrorists and on the reputation of Canada in the world. I want us to ask ourselves if the military strategies that I have described and which were in the paper and on television last week and have never been denied by anybody in authority in the United States, are used and if the results and repercussions that I have also

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described coming from experts who know about these things, do all those horrible things seem to my colleagues to be a proportional response, an appropriate response to the threat posed by the situation in Iraq today?

•(1640)

**Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Canadian Alliance):**

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her comments. I certainly disagree with much of what she had to say. I believe she based her evidence on a *Los Angeles Times* article and this whole nuclear strategy which she is proposing that is hypothetical at this point.

What is not hypothetical at this point is that yes, there are dead people, maimed people, starved people and thirsty people already in Iraq at the hands of Saddam Hussein. Those things have already occurred under the leadership of that dictator in that country. We have seen what he has done to his own people. Our colleague from Elk Island outlined how Saddam Hussein even had his own sons-in-law put to death because they told the truth about his true nature and what was going on in Iraq.

I have yet to hear from members on the government side today what they propose. What is the solution? What should be done if Saddam Hussein does not comply? I would like to hear that from someone on the government side. We have not heard that at all today.

Once again we have heard from the member that we should be cautious and that war is horrible. We know that. No one wants to go to war, not one person in this country. At the same time do we sit idly by and let an evil man continue to go unchecked? What is the answer? What is the hon. member's answer to that question?

•(1645)

**Ms. Bonnie Brown:** Mr. Speaker, it is true that there are hungry and thirsty people in Iraq today. There are millions in Africa who are hungry and thirsty. There are millions in North Korea who are starving to death. It is this obsession with one dictator, one evil person in the world that has put me off personally right from the beginning. I remember asking in October why it was that one nation got to pick the dictator of the hour.

For example, in considering threats to world safety there was another interesting article in the *Washington Post* that said yes, Colin Powell has the rods to prove nuclear activity. He has the trucks pulling up and moving these rods around. Oops, the only problem is it is all in North Korea, but the President of the United States wants to go to Iraq and not North Korea. Containment is good in North Korea, which is far more threatening with its abilities and capabilities than Iraq, but the president does not want to go to Korea. He wants to go to Iraq.

One of the columnists wrote that Colin Powell or the whole administration has taken fuzzy evidence about Saddam Hussein and made it very scary and has taken very scary evidence about North Korea and kept it very fuzzy. We do not have to allow someone else to decide for us which is the worst dictator in the world at the present time. In trying to maintain peace, one is searching for connections and diplomatic ways of reaching all these people and helping them to build a more democratic state and culture.

### Supply

What I object to is the demonization of one of them. I ask, what happened to Osama bin Laden? I think he has become Osama been forgotten.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member on her very thoughtful presentation. I am sure she, like many of us, is receiving more and more pleas from her constituents and other thoughtful Canadians to really consider the question of whether it has not reached the point where Canada, if it is to provide leadership in this whole debate, should not declare itself a no war nation. The fact of the matter is that ever since Hiroshima and Nagasaki we have known that war is an anachronism for reasons the member herself has elaborated upon.

Could the hon. member elaborate further on what she sees as the alternative approach to dealing with the kind of threat that we face today as a result of the escalation of tensions and the almost seemingly inevitable move toward the brink of war in Iraq?

**Ms. Bonnie Brown:** Mr. Speaker, I thought the hon. member was my friend and would not put me on the spot such as she has. I agree with her that my correspondence is running currently 100 to 2 in favour of not going to Iraq. A great percentage of that 100 is against going under any circumstances.

On her question of our becoming a no war nation, most people who know me know I would agree with that. I was very impressed visiting Switzerland which apparently has one of the highest standards of living in the world. My feeling is it is because the Swiss do not waste it on building destructive forces within their country. However, they have a particular geographic location which may make that possible, I am not sure.

I do not think that Canadians and Canada are quite as far along the pattern of evolution as to be able to come to that consensus just yet. Hopefully the day will come when we can get to that point and stop wasting money on things that destroy and kill other people. There is an escalation in tension today. It is unfortunate and we are in a particularly tricky position here, but I think that our Prime Minister is doing an excellent job.

• (1650)

**Mr. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on this important issue.

We will recall that in the aftermath of September 11 many Americans and others asked the question, "Why us? Why is it these people hate us?" There was a genuine sense of bewilderment. Why in heaven's name would people fly airplanes into buildings with the avowed purpose of destroying as many innocent people as possible?

On the other side of the equation, Muslims were saying, "Our religion has been hijacked". They reacted with shame and anger. They were upset that their otherwise peaceful religion was being hijacked by people who had a strange and peculiar version of Islam.

I recently had the opportunity to participate in a forum in Taiwan on Asia-Pacific security. The Taiwanese are naturally fairly concerned about 400 missiles pointed at their island by the PRC.

The panellists were asked, what were the root causes of terrorism? I must admit that none of us had a very satisfactory answer. Some would say poverty, but not all poor people are terrorists. Some would say religion, yet there are a lot of religious people in this world and

they are by no means terrorists. Some would talk about ethnicity and race, but again those are not very satisfactory answers when trying to come to some of the root causes of terrorism. Possibly in this world we will never arrive at the root causes of terrorism, at least not in this lifetime.

I would like to examine some of the root causes of terrorism in this particular context and look at why I am suggesting that our analysis is in fact fairly deeply flawed.

We as a western society lack an understanding of violence based on religion. We are a secular society and do not understand or comprehend religious people at any level. We mouth shibboleths about freedom of religion and then hope that people go off and do their religion in some private little sphere. We therefore have no context or understanding or dialogue because we have privatized religious expression. When an event like September 11 happens, we tend to castigate Islam instead of going just a little bit deeper.

Stephen Schwartz has written a book called *The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Sa'ud from Tradition to Terror*. In it he tries to extricate Islam from the demonizing tendencies of Washington plutocrats, the intellectually lazy media, and Islam's own extremist sects. His thesis states:

The princes of Saudi Arabia share power and the fabulous wealth of their petrodollars with a hereditary priestly hierarchy overseeing a cultic travesty of Islam known as Wahhabism, after its 18th-century founder. Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was a poorly educated, narrow-minded, homicidal fanatic whose idiosyncratic, austere and uncharitable vision for his religion flew in the face of its own teachings and those accorded to its Prophet.

al-Wahhab saw himself as an equal to the prophet Muhammad—this, of course, most people in Islam considered to be a heresy.

Not blessed with false modesty, or indeed any modesty at all, he believed that other Muslims who did not agree with him were in fact unbelievers and that other faiths needed to be humiliated or destroyed. He banned books, music, and destroyed the graves of Muslim saints.

This virulent form of Islamic fundamentalism would merely be a band of crazies running around the deserts of Saudi Arabia if it was not for the house of Sa'ud.

Needless to say al-Wahhab did not endear himself either to his neighbours or to the Ottoman Empire at the time. He had to seek refuge with a local set of bandits. The bandits came from the house of Muhammad bin Sa'ud. The two families had an unholy alliance, which was in fact cemented by marriage. The Sa'ud family took care of the political power and the Wahhabi family the religious authority. This was a mutually beneficial arrangement cemented by marriage. If the Wahhabi sect announced that a certain group of Muslims were unbelievers then they were fair game for murder, rape, robbery, et cetera, and the leadership of the al-Sa'ud house enthusiastically pursued that.

• (1655)

Schwartz says this merger of extremist ideology and absolute state was the first example of totalitarianism. It preceded Hitler and Stalin by about 200 years. Who would care except that these murderous crazies struck it—

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is great to have a history lesson, but could the member please speak to the motion.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I hope the House would understand that for the Speaker to address the issue of relevancy would take far too long and I probably would not be relevant.

I know that from time to time members need some time to develop their subject matter to arrive at the point of debate. I am sure that in this instance, no different than most others, the hon. member for Scarborough East will in fact address the issue of the day.

**Mr. John McKay:** So these crazies struck it fabulously rich. First the British and then the Americans in 1945 struck a deal with the Saudis to control the production of oil through a company called Aramco. The cruelty, greed and hypocrisy of the Wahhabi-Saudi alliance was matched only by the behaviour of the United States through big oil. Endless time and dollars were spent on prettifying the extremist and terrorist origins of the Saudi monarchy. The Wahhabi terrorists were sanitized for the American-western public.

However now it is starting to unravel. Schwartz writes:

...the Saudi aristocracy had become an unparalleled symbol of debauchery, ostentation and waste, as well as ignorance, prejudice and brutality.

But as guilt money, they send huge amounts to the Wahhabi whose clerics control schools and mosques all over the world including Canada and the United States. Sermons and terrorism come from the same package. Is it any accident that 15 out of the 19 terrorists that drove the airplanes into the buildings were in fact from Saudi Arabia?

Why then is President Bush so keen to attack Iraq? If this war is against terrorists, why not confront that reality? Saddam Hussein is a murderous crazy, but he is hated by the Wahhabis because he is too secular.

Iraq has a significant population of Shia-muslims as does Iran. The Wahhabi dislike them as well. Osama bin Laden cannot survive without Saudi funds. The al-Qaeda is a Wahhabi terrorist outfit.

Why would we spend a lot of time invading Iraq, getting rid of Saddam Hussein and in fact doing the al-Qaeda a favour? The terrorists of September 11 are up in northern Pakistan and Afghanistan. They will be delighted to see Saddam Hussein go because he is as much an enemy of Wahhabi as that infidel, George Bush. "The enemy of my enemy is my friend". In a perverse sort of way President Bush and Osama bin Laden have a common enemy.

It does not get much crazier than this. Many reasons have been advanced against our proceeding into a war against Iraq, not the least of which is that some of the evidence is suspect.

I noted that in the commentary on the evidence presented by Secretary of State Powell yesterday, probably the weakest link had to do with the connection between Baghdad and Osama bin Laden.

This is not a war against the terrorism of September 11. This is another agenda all together. If in fact President Bush succeeds there may well be a regime change. However that regime change could and might possibly look like Saudi Arabia, fabulous wealth for a few, and support for Wahhabi and its murderous version of Islam preached worldwide.

### *Supply*

We may all dance around resolution 1441. The Alliance wants Canada to go to war with or without resolution 1441. The NDP does not want us to go to war even if the UN approves resolution 1441. The government awaits debate coming out of resolution 1441 from the Security Council. Meanwhile Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein share the view that resolution 1441 is irrelevant.

Saudi Arabia ducks the issue. It does not want the flow of its wealth, its fabulous wealth, jeopardized, but at the same time it nurtures and protects the Wahhabi which terrorizes other factions of Islam as well as Hindus and Christians. Meanwhile it builds its mythic version of an Islamic state worldwide.

Let us stay focused. The terrorists of September 11 would like nothing more than the west opening up another front. We should deal with Osama bin Laden and his merry group of fanatics, confront Wahhabi wherever we find it, appeal to the spiritual leaders of Islam, Christianity and Judaism that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael wants no part of having his name used to justify murder and mayhem.

Canada should offer itself up for further peacemaking activities in Afghanistan. By doing this we stay within a principled response to the UN resolutions and the fight against terrorism.

● (1700)

Those are the comments I wish to offer in our debate today. I want to make it very clear that our concern is that we stay focused on the terrorism that emanated from September 11. That was the terrorism that in fact affected us all.

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, as my friend from Wild Rose said, the member for Scarborough East certainly gave us a tremendous insight on world events and religion and so on and so forth, but he had absolutely nothing whatsoever to say about the motion presently before the House.

The motion before the House is designed specifically by the Canadian Alliance, the official opposition, seconded by the Bloc Québécois, to get the House to a point where members of the House of Commons would have the opportunity to represent their constituents in this place, to act in a democratic way in this place and to be able to vote on the question of war.

The government has created a situation whereby we are unable, in this chamber, to represent our constituents. Yes, we can come here and make speeches such as the member made, such as all of us have the opportunity to make, but we cannot come here and do what we must do, which is to act responsibly, act transparently and act on behalf of the people of Canada.

The question on the floor today is about a vote.

I noted that the member talked about the fact that people do not want to dance around resolution 1441 and stated that Saudi Arabia wants to duck this issue. He said let us stay focused. So let us stay focused and let me ask my friend, will he support the motion, which would permit democracy to come back to the House of Commons?

*Supply*

**Mr. John McKay:** Madam Speaker, I am glad the member opposite is finally starting to get focused, because the issue here is to look at the false premise that underlies a lot of our so-called posturing around Iraq. The issue is that we have not done an analysis of what motivated the terrorists of September 11. In some respects, it is almost a discrete silo. If we in fact had done an analysis, we might be able to say to ourselves that the terrorists are in fact somewhere else, that they are not in Baghdad. The terrorists are somewhere else. It is a separate issue altogether.

As to the issue of the vote, I looked at the motion and initially thought that it seemed plausible. Then, upon reading further, I noted that it states we are to “concur in the decision by the government regarding Canada’s involvement in military action to disarm Saddam Hussein”. That is just a terrific idea except that the Parliament of Canada will be voting on something that has already happened. For argument’s sake, if the government today decided that troops were to be dispatched, then on the following day we would debate this and vote on it. That would be a tremendous message to our military people if the vote were a very ambiguous vote, so I will not be supporting this motion.

• (1705)

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I give respect to the Canadian people for their decision at voting time when they placed the government in charge and gave it a mandate to run the country. I give the cabinet full respect in the responsibility to enter into discussions and make very important decisions regarding international affairs such as those before the world today. I respect that all the way.

What the motion asks is that once the executive makes a decision that it give all members in the House the opportunity to concur in that decision. The government would make that decision based on information we would never have. Understandably I do not expect to get information that the executive would get with regard to the situation for security reasons and intelligence reasons. I would expect the cabinet to have a lot more information so that it could make a decision, but I do want to be respected enough in this democratic country to be given the opportunity to concur or not concur in that decision on behalf of the people of Wild Rose.

Would this member not like to be able to do the same thing for the constituents of his riding?

**Mr. John McKay:** Mr. Speaker, I made the point of pulling out security resolution 1441. It is actually two pages of whereas and three pages of resolutions, with two more annexes. The final and 13th paragraph of the resolution states, “Recalls, in that context, that the Council has repeatedly warned Iraq that it will face serious consequences...”. I do not particularly appreciate voting on something prior to what may actually happen, so I think the motion is premature. I think the motion is immaterial at the present time.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I would like to commend my party and my foreign affairs critic for bringing forward the motion so that we can debate in the House what is right now one of the most important issues facing our country and the world community.

Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Kootenay—Columbia.

We have started the debate. This morning the Minister of Foreign Affairs came to the foreign affairs committee and laid out the government position. What has happened here is that we have brought forward a motion so that in the democratic traditions this country is built on we can debate and discuss the issue and put to a vote whether our soldiers should or should not go.

I listened to my colleague from Mississauga, to his arguments about not voting for this. It is typical, because he has probably been told by his government and his whip, cracking the whip on him, that he is not going to support it, but that really does not hold water. He is a member of Parliament, elected by the people to come to this chamber to debate and vote.

That is the whole purpose of the motion put forward by the Alliance and supported by the Bloc. This morning even the NDP members had this motion out in the foreign affairs committee because they felt that there was a need to vote on this important issue, on which we can agree and disagree. Of course we disagree with the position of the NDP, but that is fine and acceptable. In our democratic society we have agreements and we have disagreements, but at the end of the day the elected representatives must have the choice to vote. We can argue about it, and I know that my hon. colleague from Mississauga is a lawyer so as a lawyer he can argue in any direction he wants, which he is doing right now by saying he is not going to support the motion because, as he put it, it is after the fact.

The bottom line is still that the Parliament of Canada will have to vote on the issue. My colleague’s own government said this when it was in opposition.

As my colleague from Wild Rose said, we have respect for the cabinet. The cabinet, the government, has been elected to govern the country, so it will make a decision. If it is going to make a decision it should be brought here to Parliament so that we can all debate the issue and give the pros and the cons and, at the end of the day, so that Canadians know what their elected representatives think. Many have reservations about this and many do not. As we heard from a previous speaker, she had her arguments. I am glad she brought up those arguments here. Canadians can listen to her arguments here and on CPAC and can make judgments on them.

The question still remains. I heard the government House leader talk about the motion and not bringing this to a vote. It is amazing how the government plays with words and twists them around so it is not caught. It is amazing how the government can twist its words, say it does not want to do this and then shut down debate on what those members were making demands for when they were in opposition. Talk about a double standard.

Coming to the point about the situation with Iraq, my colleagues on both sides have talked about the pros and cons on Iraq and many have said no and have put forth all kinds of arguments. I would like to give my point of view, and I have two questions on the whole issue.

First, resolution 1441 was passed unanimously by the Security Council of the United Nations. The resolution was to say to Iraq, "Let inspectors in. Give them free access. If you do not, there will be consequences". The world body made a clear-cut decision by giving a message to Iraq.

• (1710)

Irrespective of the facts, my colleague asked why Iraq, why not other places, why not North Korea? Right now we are dealing with Iraq and the world body made a clear statement. What do we have after that? The inspectors went over there and the chief inspector had to come back to the United Nations and say that Iraq was not cooperating. Excuse me, but we told Iraq to cooperate with this. The resolution was given in October and we are still sitting in the same spot, with nothing resolved. As of today about half an hour ago, the President of the United States was saying the same thing, that he is not complying.

The question is, why is he not complying? Why is he not listening to the world's voice? Here today we are standing up and saying that we do not want to go to war. Yes, I agree. Nobody wants to go to war. People here are saying that they got phone calls. Yes, I got phone calls. Let us say we do not want to go to war. Who wants to go to war? In this western society we have seen the ravages of World War I and World War II. Do we think that anybody would be in favour of war in this country that has seen the ravages of World War I and World War II? No, nobody will be in favour of war.

Yes, we know that we are not at war with the people of Iraq. As a matter of fact, we are saying that there will be suffering there and we do not want any suffering. So I am asking a simple question: Why is Saddam Hussein not listening to the world's voice and saying simply and point blank "Yes, I will dismantle"?

I now come to the second point. To all the people who are accusing us of going to war to bomb the kids, I ask them, what have they done to tell Saddam Hussein to go? If he voluntarily goes tomorrow, we know there will be no war. If he goes away, there is no question of war or anything there. I am saying no, we are not going over there, we are not sending him petitions. The people of the region who will be affected by this war, none of them are talking out there.

My colleagues from the opposite side of the House will not talk about telling Saddam to go. Let me ask the Liberal member who went all the way to Iraq, did she ask Saddam? Did she tell Saddam to go for the sake of the people of Iraq? No, she did not. She came back over here and said he is a nice guy, that Tariq Aziz is a nice guy. Every time the inspectors go before the Security Council, what do we have? We have Tariq Aziz, the deputy prime minister, standing up and saying, "We will comply. We will open our doors". The doors should have been open right from the beginning.

Let us be united, with one voice, in saying to Saddam, "Either open your doors or go". Then there will be no war, because nobody wants war.

What about our own soldiers? Do hon. members think we like saying here to put the lives of our own soldiers in danger? Why would we want to go to war with the people of Iraq? They have been suffering over there. The Shiites, as my colleague from Mississauga

### *Supply*

said, and the Kurds are all suffering under Saddam Hussein. Do we think that Saddam Hussein is somebody we should stand up and clap for? Should we give him an award for being a good ruler? What has he done? For all the years he has been ruling in Iraq, Madam Speaker, give me one achievement of his for his country such that members of his own country, Iraqis, would stand behind him, except for those who justify him, who benefit from him.

The bottom line is this. We should stand up, speak with a unanimous voice and tell Saddam Hussein, first, that we are sick and tired of these games he is playing, and second, to go voluntarily, and then there would be no war. It is as simple as that.

• (1715)

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I was following the comments of my colleague from the Alliance very carefully. He spoke about resolution 1441 and he blamed Saddam Hussein for not complying with and cooperating in a proactive way on resolution 1441. He is 100% correct.

At the same time, the same resolution calls upon the western countries, upon England and the United States, to provide the inspectors with intelligence. So far everybody complains. If the U.S. says it has intelligence, the inspectors ask to have the intelligence so they can do their jobs. If the U.S., England, France and other western countries claim to have intelligence but do not provide that intelligence to the inspectors, how do we expect the inspectors to do their jobs?

If we are going to lay blame, I think it is fair to blame Saddam Hussein for not being proactive, but it is also fair to blame western countries for not being proactive by providing the inspectors with proper tools to do their job, to inspect the place and report back us. If there are weapons of mass destruction, nuclear weapons or chemical weapons, we will know where they are so we can destroy them or take action accordingly. It is fair that the west be asked to provide intelligence, and not one week before the bombing.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Madam Speaker, I am a little stunned and surprised to hear the member say that the west should supply the evidence and the intelligence.

I do not think he tuned into the last report given by Dr. Blix and the inspectors which said that Iraq was not complying. Perhaps I should tell my colleague why we have inspectors in Iraq. What is their job? What is their duty? Why were they sent over there? They were sent over there so they could look for evidence.

Dr. Blix and the inspectors went in front of the Security Council and said quite clearly that Iraq was not complying. Perhaps the member will go back and read the testimony. That is exactly what the international community said and what the inspectors said.

Yesterday, Mr. Powell and even his own foreign affairs minister said that there was disturbing evidence. I do not know what more this member wants.

**Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the subject matter of today's debate is actually excellent. I congratulate the Canadian Alliance for bringing the general subject matter together.

*Supply*

The hon. member knows that debate among parliamentarians and Canadians is happening in other forums. I know it is happening out in the lobby on his side, in the lobby on our side, in parliamentary committees and in caucus meetings. I know my colleagues and his colleagues are engaged both together and across the floor. It is happening in the offices of government in diplomatic intercourse. The debate is going on everywhere and this place is a very important place for Canadians.

The motion that has been moved today invites us all to vote on the issue, vote on confidence or on the subject matter, after we have already made a decision as a country to put our forces into some engagement somewhere if we have to do it. I suggest that will not happen in any other country in the world, after we make the move with the confidence of the House, because if it is not there we will surely know about it. Voting after we put our troops out in the theatre is not the right thing to do and that is what the motion today invites us to prepare for and do. I suggest that is the wrong thing.

● (1720)

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Madam Speaker, perhaps if he had listened to my speech he would have understood why we brought forward this motion by saying after the day. First, the government was elected to run the country so it has the authority and is required to make decisions but after the decisions are made, they are brought here.

One of the exchanges that took place this afternoon was that the Prime Minister said that if the Alliance would withdraw its motion the government would agree to a vote. The only reason we did not accept that was because the government refused to put the next day as the deadline.

Our motion calls for the next day even if Parliament is closed and the government makes a decision. However it was not willing to accept that because it then could recall Parliament maybe two months after the decision was taken based on this motion. We were not willing to agree to that which is why we refused the request of the Prime Minister when he promised there would be a vote in the House.

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I would like to bring the debate specifically to the motion today. I recognize that we have heard many sides and there are many sides on the issue. Should we be aligning ourselves with our allies? Should we be waiting for the UN? The NDP takes the position of no war at all. That is good. That is debate.

However the debate today specifically is about a vote to have a vote. Why are we doing that? First, let me say that the House leader for the Liberals displayed a totally disingenuous attitude toward what transpired, as my friend from Calgary just told us.

My party whip was very specific when he said that he would take the Prime Minister up on his offer if the Prime Minister would guarantee that he would schedule the official opposition an allotted day the day after the government makes a decision.

However, the disingenuous comments by the House leader who said that what they were really talking about was the first day that the House was sitting, leads to the issue that my friend from Calgary just pointed out.

This kind of slipperiness on the part of the House leader is really unhelpful in this situation. Our motivation, very simply, is to bring democracy back to the House of Commons in Canada. There is nothing more complex about it than that.

The government has studiously refused to do what it asked for when it was in the opposition. When it was on this side of the House in 1991, in the previous altercation against Saddam Hussein, it was crying for and demanding a vote in this place and yet when it gets to that side over there it says, no. We have only one way to do it and we have done it with this motion.

I will be the first person to admit that the wording of the motion is very detailed and very arcane but the problem is that to satisfy the requirements of the table and the Chair in this place, we have to use very precise words as prescribed by the table and Chair in this place. We have done the only thing that we can do, which is to call for a vote to have a vote, to basically confirm or to give authority to say that the executive, the government that would make the decision, made the correct decision and, indeed, it is a vote of confidence.

The House leader was totally disingenuous in attacking this because the motion is based on many of the motions that the government House leader himself moves on an almost routine basis. I did a quick review of the year 2002 from September to June and I noted that the government House leader had moved some 80 motions of this type.

We got the idea for the motion from the House leader of the Liberals. Therefore it is totally disingenuous on the part of himself, on the part of the Prime Minister and in terms of the feigned outrage of some of the backbenchers, to say that we cannot do this, that it is bogus or that it is out of place, and so on and so forth. It is the only way we can bring democracy back to the House of Commons.

I am proud to boast that democracy is alive and well in Kootenay—Columbia. The people of Kootenay—Columbia have a member of Parliament who believes in listening to the people of the constituency. They have a member of Parliament who has circulated, either through my website, my homepage or through publications in my constituency, a request for input from people in my constituency. It has been most gratifying to receive e-mails, faxes and phone calls. I have attempted to respond to every one of them that I possibly could. Many people were opposed to the position of my party and many people were supportive of the position of my party, but I learned so much because, after all is said and done, I am only one person.

● (1725)

I do not have all the answers nor do I have all the intellect but I do have 86,000 people in my constituency who are engaged in this issue and engaged in the democratic process. I come to the House of Commons and I cannot exercise my democratic right to vote on behalf of the people of Kootenay—Columbia. To the Liberals I say, shame on them. It is just plain wrong.



*Supply*

We have made the point very clearly and very specifically that in our form of government that although approximately 60% of the people who turned up at the ballot box voted against the Liberals or voted for another alternative, the Liberals are a majority government with only 40% of the popular vote. Nonetheless, that is our British parliamentary system and they have a majority government. The Prime Minister has the right to form the government as requested by the Governor General.

We do understand that the Liberals have the right to make this decision but, doggone it, I demand the right on behalf of the people of Kootenay—Columbia to express a vote. That was why I was sent here. I was not sent here just to make speeches. I was sent here to represent the people through voting in this Chamber. This is a situation that is intolerable.

We have seen time and time again that the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's Office have treated not only the backbenchers but indeed this entire Chamber as second class citizens. They simply go ahead and effect changes without ever referring or feel that they have to refer back to the House of Commons.

On an issue like this, on an issue of life and death for our brave armed forces, for all of those personnel, for all of their families, for the safety, the welfare and the security of Canadians, this is an issue of gigantic proportions. For us to be frozen out of the democratic process in a place that is supposed to be at the core of our democracy, the House of Commons, is just unspeakable.

**Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I want to ask my colleague a question that really was asked by the newly appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, the member for Brampton Centre.

During the debate of my colleague from Kootenay—Columbia, the parliamentary secretary said that the motion was too confusing and asked if the member could make it simpler.

What this motion is about is that we want to have a vote. I was wondering if the member for Kootenay—Columbia might be able to perhaps use his wax crayons or pencil crayons to spell out clearly one more time the essence of the motion for our friend across the way.

• (1730)

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for helping me explain. I will speak as slowly as I can to give him the opportunity to understand.

To recap, it is the position of the official opposition, and I believe of all members of the opposition, that members of Parliament have a right to vote in this chamber. The Government of Canada has stopped the ability of members of Parliament to vote in this chamber on the issue of Canada potentially going to war. We cannot put a hypothetical motion. We cannot. It would simply be ruled out of order by the people who understand parliamentary procedure between the Table and Chair.

We chose the wording on the same basis as the House leader chooses, and indeed as the finance minister chooses when the budget is brought into the House of Commons. This is what happens. The cabinet brings a motion into the House of Commons with respect to

how taxpayers' money is going to be spent, or in the case of the Liberals, squandered. After that there is a vote where members of Parliament have an opportunity to vote to confirm what the government frontbench has done.

It is very clear. I cannot possibly explain or parse all of the sentences in the motion. They are simply there because they have to be there. That much detail is needed in order to comply with parliamentary procedure. The intent of the motion is no different from the intent of other motions or the intent of the budget when they are put before this place. As I pointed out, today's motion is exactly the same as 80 motions of this type that were presented between September 2001 and June 2002.

If our colleague from the Liberals does not understand the idea of putting democracy back into the House of Commons, I say shame on him. If he does not understand how the motion is supposed to work, I would suggest he take advice from the Table just as we and our House leader have.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I really appreciate the message that the hon. member gave.

Today he, as well as myself and others, have listened to the Liberals speak to the debate. Only one member from the Liberal side even alluded to the motion. The rest of the speeches were so far from the motion that we had to call on the Speaker on a number of occasions to intervene and get to the topic, which they did not. They were asked to get to the issue of the day and the issue of the motion and they did not. They spoke about everything else.

I have come to the conclusion that the reason they are not willing to speak to the motion is that they do not really believe in democracy. There is no other conclusion to draw from it. I wonder if the member would comment on that.

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** Madam Speaker, of course I can only agree, but I think there is a little more to it than that.

It was interesting that when the Alliance House leader rose in the House of Commons to present the motion, he was not immediately met by the House leader of the Liberals. That would be very ordinary. He was met in debate by the foreign affairs minister who interestingly split his time with a backbencher from Durham, which I guess says something about how seriously the Liberals took our motion.

Why, I ask myself, would the House leader of the government not engage in debate with the House leader of the official opposition at that time? Why was there a time lapse between 10:30 a.m. and 3 p. m.? The reason is he was out polling his backbenchers to make sure he could get them on side to vote against this motion.

• (1735)

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Mount Royal.

We are debating a very important issue today. The opposition motion, as I have said, is very confusing, very political. There is no need to play politics with the lives of Canadian soldiers who may be sent to Iraq.

### Supply

Ten or 12 years ago there was an expression in the U.S., "It's the economy, stupid". On this occasion the statement could be, "It's the oil, stupid". This issue—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but there is a question with regard to the type of language used in the House. I did give a lot of leeway earlier on a certain word that was used by a certain member without naming the member. The word "stupid" is borderline.

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian:** Madam Speaker, this war with Iraq has nothing to do with nuclear weapons, has nothing to do with weapons of mass destruction, has nothing to do with terrorism and has nothing to do with chemical weapons. It has to do with oil and nothing else.

I would like to give some historic background about the situation in the Middle East.

Iraq was part of the Ottoman empire going back to the 15th century. At the beginning of the last century and the breakup of the Ottoman empire, Iraq was under the mandate of the British government, part of the Middle East government and the French government. Iraq was basically under English occupation. It was a kingdom until 1958 when there was a coup against the king.

Saddam Hussein came to power about 30 years ago and has been in power since then. Over the last 25 or 30 years Saddam Hussein has done terrible things against his own people and terrible things in the region.

Iraq and Iran were involved in a war where over one million people died. At the time, Iraq was supported by the United States and the U.K. It was given all the weapons it wanted. Iran was supported by Israel because both of them had interest in the area and wanted to ensure the control of it.

Ten years after the Iraq-Iran war was finished, he attacked Kuwait for no reason. Saddam Hussein claimed that Kuwait was stealing oil from them. The whole situation began with oil and it continues on today as a war about oil.

It is no secret that I was born in the Middle East. There was a time when our governments there closed down the schools and asked us to take part in demonstrations against what they called American imperialism or Israeli Zionism, whatever the case may have been.

I was there last year and it is now the other way around. People want to demonstrate but the government is oppressing their demonstrations. Why? There is so much anti-Americanism in the world and no one can explain why. Anti-Americanism is so bad in the Muslim world that the U.S. government ran TV commercials saying there were no problems between Muslims and the American government. That shows how bad the situation is.

In today's debate we are talking about Canadian participation in a possible war. A survey of Canadians was done recently asking how many would support the war without the UN. Ninety per cent of Canadians said they do not want a war without UN approval. Why do we have to go to war without the UN?

This morning's *Globe and Mail* reported on a survey of 8,000 people in 14 countries which was conducted from November 11 to December 14. In Canada 58% said they are against going to war. Of the 14 countries, Turkey is the only country on the border with Iraq

and 80% of its citizens are against a war. That country is supposed to be a bad neighbour because there is bad blood between Iraq and Turkey and in that country, 80% of the people are against a war. In the United Kingdom 75% of its citizens are against a war. In the U.S. A., 62% of its citizens are against a war. This war is less popular than the war in Vietnam.

During the war in Vietnam the House of Commons took a vote. Everybody voted against the war in Vietnam except the late Right Hon. John Diefenbaker. He was the only soul against the resolution. It took us 20 years to find out that the war in Vietnam was the wrong war. If people are going to wait 20 years to find out this is the wrong war, then God bless their souls.

Our colleague the hon. member for Don Valley West wrote a very nice article in the *Toronto Star* yesterday. I hope everybody will take a minute to read the article because he makes a very good argument. Many of our—

• (1740)

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There is probably a time and a place when somebody might be interested in the member's opinions. I would really like to know if he is going to allow me a chance to vote.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** I am sorry but that is not a point of order.

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** Get him to the topic.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** If you want to talk about relevance, yes, but it is not a point of order that you raised.

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian:** Madam Speaker, I and many members of Parliament received hundreds of letters against the war. I have a bunch of them here. I have about perhaps 2,000 or 3,000 signatures here.

I take it that the member will not give his consent, but if I did have unanimous consent, I would table these letters and petitions so that people could see where the Canadian people stand. Ninety per cent of them are against war.

**An hon. member:** How are you going to vote?

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian:** I want to come back to the resolution—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** I see we are deteriorating at the end of the day. The hon. member for Wild Rose has an opportunity for questions and comments allowed for under the Standing Orders of the House. I would appreciate if the same courtesy were shown to the member as was shown when other members were speaking in the House.

The hon. member wanted unanimous consent to table his petitions. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian:** Madam Speaker, if the hon. member is very upset perhaps he could step outside while I finish my speech.

*Supply*

Getting back to the motion, the motion asks us to vote again in the future. I made the point earlier that it is so confusing. All the opposition had to do was to ask the House in a motion do we agree with the idea of sending our troops to fight the war in Iraq, yes or no. If members agreed, they could vote yes, that they wanted to send their sons and daughters to war. If they did not agree, then they could vote no. The way this motion is written, the day after we send the troops, we would have a debate and we would say yes or no.

If it happened that we sent the troops to the Middle East to fight the war and we had the vote the day after, as I made the point earlier, and we decided to defeat the motion, would the opposition expect us to call back the army, turn back the ships, turn back the planes, stop the bombing because here in the House we said no, we do not want to have a war? In the meantime soldiers would be there fighting.

What is the point of having a motion like this? It is so confusing. It plays so much with politics and with human lives it is unbelievable. I do not know why the opposition would bring forward this motion. I do not know who would support such a motion. I am sorry to say that the Bloc Québécois seconded the motion and made additions to it.

I will be voting against the motion. This motion is totally unacceptable as far as I am concerned.

We spoke earlier about the presentation made yesterday at the UN by Colin Powell. I do not think in my point of view many people accept the fact he made a very good point. The French government and the Russian representative asked for more inspectors. What is wrong with that, rather than having 120 inspectors, having 220 inspectors? What is wrong with having planes fly over Iraq to find out where the weapons are being kept? Why does Iraq not provide the inspectors with the information? They claim they know where this person is keeping the weapons, so let us work together to make sure this person is disarmed so we can prevent a war without having to kill hundreds of thousands of people, most of them innocent people. That would be good for everybody.

I look forward to questions from the opposition members. I am sure they are itching to ask me questions.

• (1745)

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I listened intently as the member spoke. He mentioned that he was born in the Middle East. Obviously he is concerned about what is happening there.

My question emanates from a number of speeches from the government side today. The members have said that Iraq is not the main threat. Some members have talked about North Korea and some have talked about other countries. The government would say Iraq is not the main threat.

I am at the point now where I am not sure if the weapons inspectors are there necessarily because they see Iraq as the main threat or if they are there because Iraq for the last 12 years has totally disregarded United Nations resolutions.

We are talking about the weapons of mass destruction that Iraq has. It is up to Iraq to clearly show that those weapons have been disarmed or eliminated. It is not the responsibility of the United

Nations to go on a scavenger hunt or a search and rescue for these weapons.

The responsibility of the United Nations is to see the evidence that these weapons that everyone knows Iraq has have been destroyed. We are not there because Iraq is the greatest threat in the world. We are there because for 12 years we have not had the resolve from the United Nations to stand up to the resolutions it has put in place. The threat here is that the United Nations will end up becoming an old senior citizens debating club and lose its relevance.

I do not want Parliament to lose its relevance. We want Parliament to debate the issue of sending our people to war. We are not saying that once our soldiers are over there we will take a vote. We are saying when the government decides that we will side with our allies, if it does, then members will have the opportunity to stand up in the House and vote yes or no.

The New Democratic Party has said that regardless of what happens we should never go to war. The Canadian Alliance believes that we give the United Nations the opportunity for time. If the United Nations decides that the resolutions are not being upheld and that Iraq has not complied, then we believe we must side with our allies.

Let us all have the courage to stand up in the House and vote. Why is it a double standard now when the government argued so much in favour of a vote in 1991 or 1992 in the gulf war? Why has the government said that it was good then but it is not good now? Why is this member so adamantly opposed to standing up and being counted?

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian:** Madam Speaker, that was a very long question.

First, I would like to apologize, on his behalf, to seniors. Seniors are just as important to me as everybody else. They have the right to speak on this issue, be it in the UN or whatever.

The member asked why the government was picking on Iraq? Last January George Bush gave a speech to the U.S. congress. He used the phrase "axis of evil". By that he meant Iraq, Iran and North Korea.

We all know North Korea has weapons of mass destruction. We all know of its capacity to bomb Hawaii or Japan. How did the U.S. react? It is sending the army over to Iraq and confining North Korea within its region.

The other point the member made about resolution 1441 was that Iraq was not cooperating. Resolution 1441 asked specifically for the west to provide intelligence information for the inspectors to do their job. The U.S. and the west has failed to do that.

Mr. Blix will have to come to a conclusion. Next week he will present a concrete resolution to this issue by saying that, yes, Iraq has weapons of mass destruction based on intelligence, or no, it does not. If Mr. Blix is not provided with the tools to work with how can we expect him to make a recommendation to resolve the conflict and come back with a report that says, yes, Iraq has weapons of mass destruction?

*Supply*

• (1750)

**Mr. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will organize my remarks around two basic themes: first, UN Security Council resolution 1441 as the legal framework for the determination of Iraqi cooperation and compliance with its disarmament obligations under the resolution; as the legal framework for the determination of whether there has been a material breach of these obligations; the determination of the serious consequences that would result from such a material breach; and as the background frame of reference for this motion and the appreciation of the merits of this motion; and second, the international juridical principle of the exhaustion of all remedies short of war as a precondition for military action; and again, as a background frame of reference for the appreciation of this motion.

Let me begin with some basic truths respecting the oft-cited, but apparently not well read, UN Security Council resolution 1441. For what is not sufficiently appreciated is that the UN Security Council, in this resolution, had already determined “that Iraq has been and remains in material breach of its obligations under relevant resolutions, in particular through its failure to cooperate with UN inspectors and the IAEA”, since the enactment of UN resolution 687 in 1991.

Accordingly, the United Nations Security Council decided by resolution 1441 to afford Iraq one final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations by setting up what it called an “enhanced inspection regime” with the aim of “bringing to full and verified completion the disarmament process”, and resolved that any false statements or omissions in the declarations submitted by Iraq, or failure by Iraq at any time to cooperate and comply with implementation of this resolution “shall constitute a further material breach of Iraq’s obligations and will be reported to the council for assessment”, and that Iraq would face serious consequences as a result of its continued violations.

On January 27 chief weapons inspector Hans Blix reported that Iraq “appears not to have come to a genuine acceptance of the disarmament which was demanded of it” in the course of submitting a comprehensive and critical 15 page catalogue of Iraq’s failure to demonstrate with documents, interviews and other evidence, that it had eliminated its prohibited weapons program, particularly chemical and biological weapons.

The United Kingdom concluded at that point that Iraq was in material breach of the UN resolution. President Bush, in his state of the union address, concluded that Iraq’s intent was “not to disarm but to deceive”.

Yesterday, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell disclosed telephone intercepts, satellite photos, and statements from Iraqi defectors which he characterized as “irrefutable” and “undeniable evidence” about Iraq’s alleged and illegal weapons program, its attempts to hide these weapons from inspectors, and its links to terrorist groups.

In conclusion on this first theme, it would appear both from a reading of the report by Dr. Hans Blix, let alone the evidence submitted by Secretary of State Powell yesterday, that there is prima facie evidence in the form of witness testimony and documentary

evidence of a material breach of UN Security Council resolution 1441.

However, what appears to be missed here is that what has to be determined at this point is that it is the UN Security Council that has to make the determination, based upon witness testimony and whatever documentary evidence is put before it, as to whether there is a material breach. It is similarly up to the UN Security Council to then determine the serious consequences that would ensue in light of this finding.

In a word, it is for the UN Security Council and the UN Security Council alone, not any other interlocutors, however compelling their evidence may be, to determine whether there has been a material breach of UN Security Council resolution 1441 as a finding of fact, and whether serious consequences including military action would follow as a conclusion of law.

Indeed, even U.S. President Bush, in his initial request for the convening of the meeting yesterday of the UN Security Council and for the production of evidence of material breached before it, appears to appreciate the legal authority of the UN Security Council in this matter.

This brings me to my second theme, the bedrock legal principle that requires that all remedies short of war be exhausted if resorting to war is to be sanctioned.

I would submit that all remedies short of war have yet to be exhausted. In particular, and having regard to the Blix report, even leaving aside Secretary of State Powell’s submission yesterday, I would recommend that the following approaches be pursued and which have been made more compelling by Secretary of State Powell’s submission.

First, the inspection team should be further enhanced, both in terms of personnel going from 120 to at least 360 and in terms of physical resources such as an additional office in the southern city of Basra. Second, Iraq must make a complete and exhaustive inventory of concerns regarding weapons capacity.

• (1755)

The 1,200 page dossier that was to be Iraq’s “full, final and complete declaration” was utterly flawed. Iraq, as per the Blix report, must account for, and this is again without reference to Secretary of State Powell’s submission yesterday: thousands of tonnes of chemical precursors, thousands of litres of biological warfare agents, thousands of missing chemical munitions, the unaccounted for Scud missiles, the missing weaponized VX poison, the disappeared mobile biological laboratories, the missing and deadly anthrax, and the violations on the restrictions of ballistic missiles. Iraq must provide the necessary and verifiable responses to these and other disarmament concerns posed by Dr. Blix who also spoke of a capability that his team could have for these purposes.

Third, Iraq must permit unfettered access to the dozens of skilled scientists who are at the core of the Iraqi weapons program. Their witness testimony is crucial to determining whether Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction have been destroyed. Yet the evidence is not only as Dr. Blix has disclosed, that Iraq has impeded access, but that it has intimidated—

**Mr. Grant McNally:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if we may have unanimous consent to hear the end of our colleague's speech.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** Is there unanimous consent of the House to let the hon. member conclude his speech?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[*English*]

**Mr. Irwin Cotler:** Madam Speaker, I will conclude quickly in that regard.

The evidence that we have now is not only, as Dr. Blix has disclosed, that Iraq has impeded access to skilled scientists on the Iraqi weapons program, but that it has intimidated them on penalty of death including their families should they provide any witness testimony or should they even try to leave the country for that purpose.

Fourth, Iraq has withheld the necessary documentation regarding its weapons programs, especially nuclear programs, which require an array of supporting data which need to be cross-checked against the material that has been declared.

Fifth, there needs to be a determination of nuclear capability data including the exposing of new technologies like those developed by North Korea and which can be used to mask, as we have learned, a nuclear program. In this connection allegations respecting importation of controversial shipments of aluminum tubes must also be addressed in this regard.

Sixth, Iraq must guarantee the safe deployment of a U-2 reconnaissance plane for aerial imagery and surveillance during inspections which it has not done.

Seventh, the inspections regime should also factor into their own inquiry the serious allegations made by Secretary of State Powell regarding Saddam Hussein's weapons capacity.

In conclusion, the military option may at some further point, if so determined by the UN Security Council respecting both the gravity of the material breaches and the compellability of serious consequences, become necessary. However it is not yet inevitable. The remedies have not yet been exhausted. The UN inspections regime has yet to be reported to the UN Security Council on February 14. The UN Security Council has yet to deliberate even upon such a report and determine whether there has been a material breach based on all witness testimony and documentary evidence available to that point.

Again, we appear to forget that it must be the UN Security Council which makes that finding of fact as to whether there has been a material breach, not all the compelling evidence which we now have in the form of witness testimony and in the form of documentary evidence which appears to make that prima facie case. That determination can only be made by the UN Security Council from a juridical point of view. Only the UN Security Council can determine what are the serious consequences to follow and only the Security Council can authorize military action.

### *Private Members' Business*

In that sense, the motion before the House in some sense is jumping ahead of ourselves, though I can appreciate its merits. As President Bush himself said, and this may have been forgotten, "War should be a last resort". That itself, by President Bush in that statement, was an acknowledgement of the foundational, juridical principle of the exhaustion of all remedies short of war.

We are in that process right now. We are seeking to exhaust all those remedies short of war. When the inspection regime reports back to the UN Security Council on February 14 another deliberative process must take place to for the purpose of whether there is a finding of a material breach, a determination of whether serious consequences should follow, and a determination of what those serious consequences may be which follow. It is not necessarily automatically military action.

Even then all the serious consequences of war must be factored into such a decision: the humanitarian, political, economic, juridical and regional consequences of resorting to war as well as consequences of perhaps not resorting to war.

• (1800)

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** It being 6 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply is deemed to have been put, and the recorded division is deemed to have been demanded and deferred until Tuesday, February 11, 2003, at 3 p.m.

[*English*]

It being 6 p.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

### ACADIAN PEOPLE

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ)** moved:

That this House officially acknowledge the harm suffered by the Acadian people from 1755 to 1763.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today in the House to debate Motion M-238, which says, "That this House officially acknowledge the harm suffered by the Acadian people from 1755 to 1763."

Unfortunately, this motion will only be debated for one hour since, against all expectations, it was not deemed votable by the Subcommittee on Private Members' Business.

As you probably know, this motion is a follow-up to the initiative I took in October 1999 as a result of the second World Acadian Congress, which took place in Louisiana. This initiative had culminated in a debate followed by a vote on Motion M-241, asking the British Crown to make an official apology to the Acadian people for the wrongs done to them during the deportation.

*Private Members' Business*

Members will recall that that motion was voted down by the House of Commons following some vile maneuvering on the part of its most vocal opponents, just as was the amendment asking that the Crown be simply invited to acknowledge this tragic historical albeit undeniable event.

It should be noted that the amendment, which had the support of the then leaders of the four opposition parties, was rejected by a narrow majority.

During the heated debate on Motion M-241, I was wantonly accused of a number of things, including having somehow put the cart before the horse by going directly to the British Crown when the Canadian Parliament had not had the opportunity to first officially review the issue. Fine. I took note of these comments by some of my colleagues and I moved this motion. Today, they will have the opportunity to be consistent.

However, bad faith seems to have presided over the analysis and treatment of the sensitive issue of the wrongs done to the Acadian people during the deportation since, this time, the Sub-Committee on Private Members' Business has pre-empted any embarrassing mistep on the part of Liberal members by making the motion non-votable.

I am looking forward to hearing what they will have to say this time around to put down the initiative and its mover.

I must say that I was surprised at the negative, not to say hostile, reception this new motion received in some circles. Perhaps people thought that, satisfied with the sudden notoriety I received from the controversy over Motion M-241, I would drop this matter and go after a new cause that would also get me in the news. They did not know me.

Let it be known that I do not intend to give up until the horrific tragedy of the Acadian deportation has been duly and officially recognized. I feel hopeful that the British Crown will inevitably make the only noble, fair and fitting gesture in the circumstances, which is to acknowledge these historic and undeniable facts and, at the same time, apologize to the Acadian people.

The process to achieve this was endorsed and then assumed on their behalf by the Société Nationale de l'Acadie and its member associations and affiliates, which is now working to take this matter before Buckingham Palace. This process led to a animated debate within the Acadian community, a debate that the House of Commons, a representative and democratic institution, cannot ignore.

The debate on the horrors of the deportation is sometimes emotional and painful, because its perverse effects, despite the tenacity, dynamic nature, originality and creativity of the Acadians, continue today. This is a matter that people have often internalized and hidden deep inside, as if to avoid disturbing or re-opening old wounds that have never healed.

The issue of responsibility for these tragic events has never been resolved, so many Acadians even developed a latent sense of culpability. Their modest gains having been won at great cost, they thought it best to keep quiet so as not to endanger them.

As a result, detractors of this effort to get the wrongs of the Acadian deportation recognized had no opposition and had free rein, so to speak. However, the evidence cannot be denied forever.

● (1805)

That is why, beyond the Société nationale de l'Acadie and its member associations and affiliates, many individuals and organizations have joined the ranks of those who support the action taken by Louisiana lawyer, Warren Perrin, over ten years ago, on behalf of these unfortunate Acadians who, in the months after the deportation began, vainly sent a petition to the King asking him to come to their assistance.

The Association des municipalités francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick and the National Assembly of Quebec are supporting the initiative taken on by the Société nationale de l'Acadie. Even the leader of the official opposition in New Brunswick, Liberal Shawn Graham, sent a letter to Her Majesty on August 13, asking her, on the occasion of her Golden Jubilee, to officially acknowledge the harm caused to the Acadians during the deportation.

Whatever some colleagues in this House may say, it has been proven that this initiative is far from being a partisan manoeuvre.

During her recent visit to New Brunswick, Her Majesty did not see fit to respond to these repeated demands. Nevertheless, the Société nationale de l'Acadie remains hopeful that this historic gesture might coincide with the anniversary of other turning points in Acadian history; 2004 is the quadcentennial of Acadia and 2005 is the 250th anniversary of the beginning of the deportation.

To avoid taking this necessary dispassionate look at our past, many have tried, often awkwardly, to shift the burden of responsibility onto the shoulders of the victims instead of the tormentors.

A colleague in this House, who I do not think was ill-intentioned, far from it, did this a few days ago in an English-language newspaper in New Brunswick. According to such people, the Acadians were, at best, very bad subjects whom it was as well not to trust, and at worse, staunch adversaries actively working to return Acadia to the French. The proof was in their stubborn refusal to pledge an oath of unconditional allegiance to the British Crown. These interpretations do not stand up to scrutiny.

I should specify that the Treaty of Utrecht made Acadians who wanted to remain in what would become Nova Scotia subjects of Her Majesty, benefiting from her protection. In fact, section 14 of the Treaty said, and I quote:

[*English*]

...those who are willing to remain here, and to be subject to the Kingdom of Great Britain, are to enjoy the free exercise of their religion, according to the usage of the church of Rome—

[*Translation*]

Queen Anne confirmed this status granted to Acadians in a letter she sent to Governor Nicholson on June 23, 1713, and I quote:

*Private Members' Business*

[English]

Extended further the terms of the treaty, granting to the Acadians who wished to remain subjects of Great Britain the privilege of retaining and enjoying their land and tenements without molestation.

[Translation]

Furthermore, between 1713 and 1755 the birth rate was such that at the time of the deportation, more than half of those who lived in Acadia had been born there. They were therefore British subjects and did not have to swear any oath of allegiance at all.

So Acadians were not some group of foreigners who were deported for military reasons or because of a conflict, particularly since the conflict had not yet erupted. The deportation began in the fall of 1755, and the Seven Year War did not begin until the spring of 1756.

The colonial authorities moved British citizens in what was a time of peace in the beginning. The situation bears a striking resemblance to what happened to the residents of the Chagos Archipelago, who, despite being British citizens, were deported in the 1960s and 1970s to allow for the construction of the Diego Garcia military base. In November 2000, Her Majesty's High Court of Justice in England ruled that the British Government had illegally deported the residents.

I must add that, in the years following the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht, the British governors made the best of things and were able to live with the oath of allegiance by the Acadians with the proviso that they not be forced to take up arms against the French, their former allies, compatriots and fellow Catholics or their Amerindian allies.

This tolerance in connection with the obligation to take up arms as the ultimate proof of allegiance seems to have some roots, or at least some precedent, in international law. The British colonial authorities repeated it, moreover, at the time of the United States War of Independence. The Anglo-Americans who had settled in Nova Scotia, on the lands of the deported Acadians, were exempted by the British colonial authorities from having to take up arms against their former compatriots, the New England rebels

I might also point out that the British authorities did however have the opportunity to test the loyalty of the Acadians and even expressed some degree of appreciation for it. Governor Mascarene wrote the following after two brief invasions of Nova Scotia by the French between 1744 and 1748:

● (1810)

[English]

To... our French Inhabitants refusing to take up arms against us, we owe our preservation.

[Translation]

Nevertheless, some have sought to prove the bad faith of the Acadians by citing the episode of the capture of Fort Beauséjour by the British in June 1755. Some 200 Acadians were inside the fort and apparently helped defend it.

How can anyone today be surprised to learn that there were Acadians within the fort, since France and England were at peace at that time. There is, however, no denying that this was a disputed area

and, moreover, a commission had been struck by the two crowns to determine where the border between Nova Scotia and New France was.

There is, however, no denying that the Acadians had settled on both sides of this ill-defined border for some time and during peacetime dealings made no distinction between the two great powers, although this was not approved of by the British authorities.

It must also be acknowledged that the British, totally ignoring the agreement between the two crowns on the borders, chose to settle the matter by force during peacetime, thereby compelling those in the fort to defend themselves as best they could, not knowing the reason for this sudden attack or what its outcome would mean for them.

All those who were there were requisitioned in a panic and mobilized to defend the fort. In fact, after the fort was taken, Colonel Monckton, in clause 4 of the capitulation act, asked that the Acadians who were there be given amnesty. The clause in question said, and I quote:

[English]

The Acadians inasmuch as they have been forced to take arms under pain of death shall be pardoned for the part they have taken.

[Translation]

There is no doubt that the issue of the oath of allegiance was just a false pretext to set in motion an operation that had been carefully planned since 1746-47 by the former Governor of Massachusetts, William Shirley.

After a calm period that was not really favourable to the setting in motion of such a plan and on the eve of a resumption of hostilities between the two great colonial powers that were fighting for control over North America, the situation was much different. All that was missing was a pretext. The Acadians' refusal to take an unconditional oath of allegiance seemed to be the perfect one.

This is evidenced by the fact that, in early July 1755, Acadian representatives were asked to go to Halifax by Governor Charles Lawrence, who ordered them to take an unconditional oath of allegiance. They first refused, then changed their minds and decided to take it. Contrary to all expectations, Lawrence refused to let them do so, arguing that it was too late. We know now that the Acadian delegates had been tricked and that, no matter what they did, they had been condemned to be deported with their people.

Indeed, in a letter dated July 9, 1755, Lawrence wrote:

[English]

I will propose to them the Oath of Allegiance a last time. If they refuse, we will have in that refusal a pretext for the expulsion. If they accept, I will refuse them the Oath, by applying to them the decree which prohibits from taking the Oath all persons who have once refused to take it.

● (1815)

[Translation]

In the instructions he gave to Colonel Monckton in January 1755, Lawrence specified clearly that after the taking of Fort Beauséjour, he should not ask any Acadian to take the unconditional oath of allegiance, and Monckton did not.

*Private Members' Business*

I will also provide another historic fact to counter the argument that the Acadians' refusal to take the oath of allegiance justified their deportation, if there were ever a need to provide another. This is about a group of approximately 200 Acadians from the Saint John River who, in 1760, after the British had invaded their area, went to Quebec to take the oath of allegiance before a British judge.

When they got back to Saint John River, they were quickly taken prisoner and then deported in 1762.

The plan was clear, well defined and Charles Lawrence did not even bother to hide it. The motives, far from being military ones, were more economic ones. In a letter that appeared in the *New York Gazette* on August 25, 1755, he wrote, and I quote:

"We are now upon a great and noble scheme of sending the neutral French out of the Province ...If we can effect their expulsion it will be one of the greatest things that ever did the English in America for ...the part of the country which they occupy is one of the best soils in the world, and, in the event, we might place some good farmers on their homesteads—

What remains to be clarified is the issue of the British Crown's responsibility about which, to my mind, there can be no doubt.

If you will allow, I will come back to this when I rise on my right of reply.

**Ms. Carole-Marie Allard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes is living in the past, while we and all Acadians are looking to the future.

I wish to thank you for giving me this opportunity to take part in the debate on Motion M-238, which reads as follows:

That this House officially acknowledge the harm suffered by the Acadian people from 1755 to 1763.

Before going any further, I will say that this motion's biggest flaw is the fact that it was introduced by a member whose party advocates breaking up this country. Will the hon. member do the honourable thing and admit that the Bloc Québécois' plan has had a devastating effect on Acadians and all French speaking Canadians? Will he apologize today to the Acadians for having tried to exclude them in such a way?

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Who wrote your speech?

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Acadians living in Louisiana are Acadians nonetheless. There is no connection here.

**Ms. Carole-Marie Allard:** The history of Canada, like that of any other country, has its sad moments. These moments are made up of events sometimes centuries old. This is the case with the deportation of the Acadians.

Canada is recognized worldwide as a bilingual country, and it is often described as a model of democracy. Since the days when, two centuries ago, Great Britain took over New France and other French colonies, Canadian society has developed relatively harmoniously into a country which, in this 21st century, is made up of two major language groups, one French speaking, and the other English speaking. These two peoples continue to live together in relative harmony and prosperity.

This coexistence is not without conflicts however. Nowadays, two large and very different language groups being able to coexist

democratically within a single state is the exception rather than the rule.

Canada's Acadian community is not one, but many communities spread throughout the Atlantic provinces. In New Brunswick, the Acadians are concentrated in the southeast, the northeast and the northwest, with groups in Fredericton and Saint John.

In Nova Scotia, there are vibrant Acadian communities in St. Mary's Bay, on the southwestern shore, on Madame Island and in the Chéticamp area, in Cape Breton.

In Prince Edward Island, the Acadians live in the Évangéline area.

In Newfoundland, they are concentrated near Cape St. George, in St. John's and in Labrador City.

Many also live on the Magdalen Islands, in Gaspé, in the Montreal area and in western Canada. All of these communities, some of them large and others not so large, illustrate the vitality of the Canadian and Acadian people and of its two official languages.

It takes incredible strength and courage to ensure the development of a minority community. The Acadians have founded schools, colleges and universities. They have created playhouses, newspapers and publishing houses. They have made exceptional breakthroughs in the areas of culture, such as theatre, movies, visual arts, music and literature. They have given the world writers, poets, artists, dancers, musicians and singers. They have set up an impressive network of businesses and have created jobs.

The Acadians take part in the success and prosperity of our country. The Government of Canada recognizes their vitality and their essential contribution to Canadian society. They are part of the seven million people in Canada who speak, sing, write, work and live in French. These francophones are evidence of the vitality and the extraordinary determination to move ahead and to flourish in a continent where the majority is anglophone.

● (1820)

The French and the English languages, and those who speak them, have shaped our country and helped define its identity. Canada's linguistic duality finds its origin in the very roots of our country. It is difficult to be interested in the Canada of today without recognizing the importance of both languages and both linguistic communities in Canadian society.

Let us go back to the motion. Two hundred and fifty years later, should the House of Commons of Canada recognize the wrong doings of a monarchy to which it is not even connected?

Let us take a closer look. My colleagues and I are forward looking, just like Acadians and Canadians in general. We are committed to making Canada the best country of the world and we intend to do our utmost in this regard.

Let us look at how far the Acadian people have come. Traditionally, the three pillars of the Acadian economy have been fishing, farming and forestry. Acadia has become a leader in each of these areas.



The fishing industry continues to be dominant in Acadian coastal areas. In view of the problems plaguing the fisheries, Acadians have been looking for alternatives to traditional fisheries. They have invested in aquaculture, especially in salmon and mussel farms. They are engaged in fish and seafood processing programs, thus contributing to the sustainable development of ocean resources.

Hundreds of Acadians work in the forests of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Most forestry workers are employed in pulp and paper plants, sawmills, and furniture and wood processing plants.

In the farming sector, Acadians showed their creativity by reclaiming land from the sea. They built dykes and tide gates to drain swamps and lowlands in order to farm them. Farming is still done in Acadia, especially in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Potatoes remain the main export, but people are turning more and more to blueberries and cranberries, thanks to crop diversification.

However, the new Acadian economy goes beyond these traditional sectors. The economic renewal in Acadia is driven mainly by the cooperative movement and Acadians' entrepreneurial spirit. Fisheries cooperatives and credit unions were the foundation of a distinctly Acadian entrepreneurial culture.

For example, the credit union movement, which started in 1945 with the *Fédération des caisses populaires*, is made up of 200 000 members and various cooperatives and credit unions. It has assets of over \$1 billion.

One of the finest examples of Acadian entrepreneurship success is Assumption Life. This major institution provides a wide variety of services in life insurance, group insurance and retirement savings plans. It also contributes, through loan, scholarship and donation programs, to education and health.

The cooperative movement has fostered the economic development of entrepreneurship in several Acadian regions. Business people have been forming networks, such as the *Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick* et the *Baie Acadienne Development Corporation*, in Prince Edward Island, to create new businesses. In Acadia, small and medium businesses have become the main job creators.

Acadia has clearly distinguished itself in the education area. To do so, it has had to overcome problems related to its minority situation and to the dispersal of its people. Acadia has an impressive network of French language universities, community colleges, schools and school-community centres. The University of Moncton, in New Brunswick, and *Sainte-Anne-Collège de l'Acadie*, in Nova Scotia, provide full French language education and attract students from all over Canada and elsewhere.

• (1825)

Through its teaching and research activities, the University of Moncton has played a key role in the promotion of French language and culture in Acadia. Many Acadian leaders, including the former governor general, Roméo LeBlanc, the Supreme Court judge, Michel Bastarache, and the Premier of New Brunswick, Bernard Lord, went to the University of Moncton. It has more than 30,000 graduates who became leaders in Acadian society—

*Private Members' Business*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but her time is up.

[*English*]

**Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton Centre-East, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, as a member of Parliament representing the constituents of Edmonton Centre-East I am pleased to speak to Motion No. 238 concerning the Acadian people.

During the Queen's Jubilee visit to Canada between October 4 and October 15, 2002, many Canadians of Acadian descent listened to her words carefully, particularly when she was visiting New Brunswick. It was hoped that the Queen would acknowledge the Acadian expulsion between 1755 and 1762. It is important to note that an apology was not requested, but rather an acknowledgement that a wrong had occurred. Seemingly the issue relates more to a formal acknowledgement of an historical fact rather than a wrong.

Certain acts can be viewed as wrong in the absolute. Genocide is a prime example. Other acts, be they the conviction and hanging of Riel or the Acadian expulsion, must be viewed in context. That which may appear to be reprehensible today may be viewed as understandable behaviour when viewed in the context of time many years ago.

It must be remembered that the primary motivation for the expulsion of the Acadians was the refusal to swear allegiance to the British Crown. At the time the British Crown was not particularly welcoming to Catholicism and was regularly at war with France, then a bitter enemy and in competition with Britain for domination of North America.

For Acadians who had fought for or supported France a refusal to swear an oath to the British Crown was often a matter of military honour in addition to concerns as to loss of religion, language and culture. Acadians attempted to balance their refusal to swear allegiance to Britain with a promise of neutrality in any future conflict between Britain and France.

For the British a promise of neutrality at the time was suspected to be insincere. An oath of allegiance to the crown was a much more serious promise of fidelity, certainly much more than an oath of fidelity to the Crown of Canada made today by separatist politicians and even by some federal civil servants.

Indeed, in the summer of 1755, during a major British offensive in North America against New France, the suspicions proved to be well founded. The Acadian settlements stood between the British and the French.

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** Some hon. members: Oh, Oh.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** Order, please. Out of respect for the member who is speaking at this time, I would appreciate it if there were no debate while he has the floor. This can be done outside the House of Commons. If this continues, I will have to name a member.

*Private Members' Business*

[English]

**Mr. Peter Goldring:** Madam Speaker, while the Acadians claimed that they were neutral, nearly 200 Acadians were found within the walls of the French battlement of Fort Beausejour when it fell to the British during the first battle of the offensive. With this discovery of deceit, the frustrated British gave the Acadians one last chance to truly swear loyalty to the Crown. Again, the Acadians refused.

The first Acadian expulsion began at Fort Beausejour. Britain then adopted an allegiance or expulsion position as a matter of strategic self-interest supported by the evidence of apparent duplicity in the Acadian pledge of neutrality. In the fall of 1755, an estimated 6,000 Acadians were expelled. Between 1755 and 1763 over 11,000 of the estimated Acadian population of 15,000 had been deported, mostly to Louisiana.

With modern value judgments and the conflict resolution techniques that most are familiar with today, it is easy to view the expulsions as an onerous, horrendous resolution to what was nonetheless at the time perceived to be a dangerous threat to social order. The Acadians would not demonstrate the degree of loyalty the British needed to be assured that social order would be maintained.

Had the Acadians of 1755 been promised freedom of language and religion in return for their oath of allegiance to the British Crown, it is very possible that most would have sworn their loyalty, expulsions would not have happened and a mass tragedy would have been averted.

The Quebec legislature has passed a motion asking the British monarchy to officially recognize the role of the British royalty in the expulsion, while Premier Bernard Landry, himself of Acadian descent, refers to the expulsions as a “crime against humanity”. Mr. Landry is trivializing the term “crime against humanity” in applying it to these facts.

While there is no disputing the historical fact that the expulsions took place, such actions at the time were both internationally acceptable and viewed as being relatively moderate. Far more grave actions could have been taken, from internment to the execution of persons viewed as traitors or disloyal to the governing authorities.

It should be noted that an appreciation of the negative consequences of the Acadian expulsions was an integral component to the royal deliberations that formed the Canada that we know today. Through the Treaty of Paris in 1763, signed by the Kings of England, France, Spain and Portugal, the religion and language of former French subjects in what is now Canada, was to be permitted. The first action taken by the new leadership established bicultural beginnings of Canada that have since grown to our wonderful multicultural country of today.

Then, in 1764, Acadians who wished to return were invited to do so if they were willing to pledge loyalty to England. An estimated 1,500 to 3,000 eventually returned and joined an estimated 3,000 who had hidden to avoid deportation. Francophones of Acadian descent now number approximately 250,000 in New Brunswick, 35,000 in Nova Scotia and 5,000 in Prince Edward Island.

Regret for the Acadian expulsions is already tacitly expressed by the terms of the Treaty of Paris of 1763, as well as by the subsequent

invitations extended to Acadians to return. The Queen could do no more than acknowledge the well-known historical facts of the time, including the tacit expressions of regret. Rather than dwell on national apologies, we should celebrate Canada's true royal beginnings. Through the Treaty of Paris, European royalty's enlightened vision of a bicultural beginning to a new world nation became a reality and guided that nation to become the multicultural Canada of today, a nation of two official languages and hundreds of unofficial languages.

Let us celebrate our royal beginnings, our royal presence and relish in the knowledge that this will also be guiding our future. Let us not deny our past but let us not apologize for it either.

● (1835)

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I first want to congratulate the member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes for introducing Motion M-238 in the House. Knowing the courage of this member, I think that he deserves to be congratulated.

I do not intend to give a history lesson on what happened to the Acadians. Reading *Hansard* will do because the member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes did a good job, much better than the member for Laval East did.

The latter talked about how the Acadians learned to harvest potatoes, chop wood, get up at five a.m., and catch fish. We are smart, we Acadians. We got used to seasonal jobs. People work only ten weeks a year. There is nothing for those Acadians.

Yes, we learned many things. The federal government learned to come to our region to cut people's employment insurance benefits, enslave them and harm families.

I do not want to sidestep the issue of asking Parliament to recognize the harm done to the Acadians by talking about what the federal government did to the Acadians. I heard the member for Laval East praising Acadians and talking about the great Acadian singers we have. We Acadians are smart.

But the political games that are played in this Parliament are totally unacceptable. The member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes moved his motion because the Liberal members could not recognize that a person has the right to have feelings about Acadians, even if he wants sovereignty for their province.

For your information, the member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes and I are distant relatives, if we trace his roots all the way back to the 1700s. His great, great, great grandmother married my great, great, great, grandfather, or my cousins' relatives.

To come here and say that this is petty politics because this was moved by a member of the Bloc Québécois is unacceptable in the House of Commons, if we have any respect for people. This is what is known as a cheap shot by the Liberals.

We discussed a votable motion moved by the member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes. It was the anglophones in the House who voted to ask for an apology from the British Crown. And it was some people who claim to be of Acadian descent who fought to defeat the motion and protect the federal government.

I raise my hat to those Liberals who voted to ask for an apology. I raise my hat because I spoke with them. They told me that they had had their arms twisted to vote against the motion of the member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes.

The member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes came to the annual assembly of the Société nationale des Acadiens. He was received with great honour. When he met with the Société des Acadiens et des Acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick, which represents Acadians from New Brunswick, he received their support.

When the member for Laval East says that she speaks for all Acadians, that Acadians do not want an apology, that is unacceptable and unfortunate. That is not what Acadians wanted. They wanted recognition, at least.

It is shameful. When the Queen came to Canada, she made a stop in New Brunswick and she was not even allowed speak to New Brunswickers. She was not even allowed to say hello to the Acadians at the Beauséjour Hotel in Moncton. When she arrived, she entered the Beauséjour Hotel and was escorted to a table. She ate and left. Her trip to Canada cost millions of dollars. A person famous around the world came to a province and was not even allowed to speak to the public. It is shameful.

● (1840)

It is the federal Liberal government that acted like this. The people who had been invited thought the Queen would address them; they thought that she might be coming for the last time. The only reason the government acted like this is because it did not want Her Majesty to address the Acadian people. Perhaps she would have had the courage to recognize, on behalf of the British Crown, the wrongs done to the Acadians, as she did with the Maori in New Zealand.

Why did she recognize those wrongs in 1980, and why was it acceptable in their case? The events took place in the 1700s. Why was it all right for them, but not for us, Acadians? We are only good potato growers; we are good strawberry and blueberry growers; we are good fishermen and lumberjacks.

That was some speech we heard from the member for Laval East. This is regrettable.

The government went rather far and let me say frankly that the way we were treated in the House of Commons is disgusting.

A good Acadian, Sandra Lecouter, who travelled to Vietnam, asked me for money to help pay for her trip. This good Acadian singer began singing at the age of 40. I met the Minister of Canadian Heritage to ask her for some money to help this lady pay for her trip to Vietnam, to represent the Acadians. The Minister of Canadian Heritage agreed to provide the \$1,200 and there was no problem. Except that we never got the money. When I inquired into this, the minister told me “Go and ask the Bloc Quebecois. You wanted to support the Bloc Quebecois motion on the Acadians, so now you can

### *Private Members' Business*

go and ask them for the \$1,200”. Can anyone claim that there are no politics involved in this? This is shameful.

I think the only reason the Liberal government defeated that motion was because it had been moved by a Bloc Quebecois member.

I raised my hat to the hon. member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes, because he had the courage to present this motion, and because he did so by taking into consideration the human side of things. For as long as I have known the hon. member, he has always worn the Acadian pin. He came to Acadia, and he has always been welcomed. He is welcomed and he is respected. He is not like some members who rise in the House and who claim that they are Acadians, but say that there is no need to recognize the wrongs done to the Acadians.

The member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes was no longer asking the British Crown to acknowledge it, but at the very least, that the Canadian Parliament do so. What happened to the Acadians should at least be acknowledged here in Canada.

You know, in Acadia, we live with this reality. I am certain that in Laval East, they do not share the same experience as those who live in Acadia. I am a true Acadian, I hear it every day, it is part of my life. It would be an historic moment to have an acknowledgement of what happened in Acadia. But our country, our own government, is unable to acknowledge this.

We talk about the deportation, but today it exists only on an economic level. No one has a job back home. Jobs in small businesses pay \$6.50 an hour. People have to go elsewhere for work. There is a deportation every day at home; people are leaving every day.

I do not see history the way the hon. member explained it. This is unacceptable.

That is why it is unfortunate that this motion is not a votable item. We have more support from anglophones in the House of Commons and from the Bloc Quebecois. The anglophones said it was time to turn the page and to recognize the harm done to the Acadians. Even when I do something wrong to one of my children in my role as a parent, I have never been afraid of admitting my mistake and apologizing.

It is another page of history that is being written tonight.

[*English*]

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC):** Madam Speaker, while the Progressive Conservative Party is supportive of the principle of the motion, we are also respectful of the right of the Acadian community to generate its own request for an apology based on the desires of its people. This is something that I think a lot of people have said.

I had a prepared address, but having listened to the debate tonight I would like to take a slightly different tack.

It is amazing to hear four groups of Canadians speak on this issue. We heard extremely varied views. I believe the member representing the governing party shocked all of us with her address.

*Private Members' Business*

[Translation]

Perhaps the member is wondering why a number of Quebeckers wanted to leave Canada.

• (1845)

[English]

She said this resolution was introduced by a party that simply wanted to leave Canada. I ask why, and I wonder has anybody ever really asked why?

Any group, regardless of race, religion or colour, that feels part of the total unit, part of the family, and that is treated as part of the family, seldom wants to leave.

In my own province of Newfoundland right now there is a royal commission studying our place in Confederation. As the hearings went around the province many people who came before that commission expressed concerns about how Newfoundland is being treated. When I look at some of the letters and e-mails I get from our own people, they are asking the same question, "Why should we be part of Canada if we are going to be treated the way we are presently being treated?" That is a very serious question.

As somebody who believes in Canada as a unit, perhaps not the Canada we have but the Canada we could have, if people were treated the same way, if people were recognized for what they are with their strengths, their weaknesses and their diversities, if they were properly recognized, as the former government tried to do back in the early 1990s, which our party strongly supported, we could have healed a tremendous amount of rifts in the country.

The member from the Alliance talked about the history of the Acadians, the French coming to Canada, and going back to the days of Champlain or even before to Jacques Cartier, who by the way wintered his boats in a little community called Renews in Newfoundland. We were probably the first people visited by the French. Champlain followed and set up the community in Port Royal. Then we had the expulsion.

One might say that is the way they did things in those days. Whether they did or not, there are two things we should consider. First, was it right? Second, the history that we read today is somebody's interpretation of what happened, whether it is right or whether it is wrong.

I have often read two history books about the same situation, the same event in history, that present entirely different views. I think of the old song Johnny Horton brought out, *Battle of New Orleans*. The first time he brought it out he sang about the British scaring away the Americans. Somebody said that was not the way to do it, so he redid the song and the good guys were the Americans. It depends strictly on the interpretation.

When we read about the history of the French in Canada, the expulsion, the return and the contribution they have made to this great country of ours, we can look back and say that, yes, perhaps atrocities were committed and, yes, it did happen. However, it is over; it is done with; those things happened.

My own background is Irish on both sides. Our people received similar treatment in Ireland. They did not leave Ireland to come to

Newfoundland for the climate. They lived on potatoes in Ireland mainly because that was all the land could produce. When the potato crop failed large groups of them in the mid-1800s came to Canada, many of them to Newfoundland, where they have a job growing potatoes still.

• (1850)

They have managed to survive and flourish not because of the climate or because the land is better to grow potatoes or any other agricultural products. It was because they had freedom and they were accepted for what they were. They were treated the same as everybody else, perhaps not originally, but certainly as they fit into society.

When we look at the diversity that makes up this great country of ours, we are all alike in one respect, but we are so different in other respects. If we treated each other for what we really are and if we were treated by our governments in a fair manner, we would not have half the problems in the country that we do.

In 1949 Canada joined Newfoundland, as I like to say. Newfoundland brought into this country tremendous resources. These resources have been developed but not for our province. They have been developed for the overall good of the country and for other countries. Our fish have been raped over the years. Our minerals have been carried off and have provided jobs in other parts of the country. Our hydro power has provided a lot of money to friends of ours. We have not benefited from the development of our resources. That was our reward for joining the country.

Newfoundland is a have not province of a half a million people with more resources than anybody in the country. Why should we be happy?

I look at the motion before us. Whether or not it was the thing to do in those days, in wars the strong won and the weak were pushed out, whether it was good or bad, what is wrong with recognizing the fact that it should not have been done? That is the principle involved here. What is wrong with saying that we made mistakes? We must not just recognize the mistakes of the past. We must make sure that we are much more conscious of what is happening today and that we do not do it again.

If we continue to operate the way the government operates, we might be expelling a lot of other French from the country and in an entirely different way. If we do what we should do and treat everybody the same and recognize them for what they are, we can have a strong unified country with all of us co-operating.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, this has been a very interesting debate. It has been interesting to look back. I was thinking of my own family members before they came to Canada, way back just after the revolution in Russia. Our families were chased off their land by people with guns. They ran at night and hid by day until they got out of that country. They came to Canada.

I suppose what we should now do is go back there and say, "We want our land back. We want our houses back. We want compensation. We want apologies". I guess there would not be anything wrong with that, but I really wish that all Canadians, whatever their background, would start looking forward more. Let us leave those things behind.

There is nothing wrong with saying that we are sorry that it happened. Most of us were not there when it happened. We did not do it. It was somebody else. On their behalf we can apologize and say we are sorry it happened. I would like us to move forward.

We have a great and vibrant country with so much potential. Let us utilize it to the fullest. Let us stop looking in the rear view mirror. Let us look at the big expanse out the windshield in front of us and see where we are going and head in that direction. I throw that in for whatever it is worth.

• (1855)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ):** Madam Speaker, first I want to tell my colleague from Elk Island that this is not about asking for an apology; it is simply about asking for acknowledgement. I agree with him that such a request should have been made to the Crown, but it was not possible thanks to our friends opposite. Let us hope that it will be possible some day.

I am not at all surprised by the speech by the member for Laval East, especially since it resembled previous speeches by certain colleagues. However, we were able to see the depth of the member's convictions, that same member who, my colleagues will recall, flirted with the Conservative Party and the Canadian Alliance before joining the Liberal Party. That just shows the depth of her convictions, and I am not at all bothered by anything she may have said in this House.

That being said, I invite the member from the Canadian Alliance to read my speech tomorrow because history contradicts some of the arguments that he put forward regarding the fact that the Acadians were supposedly given a last chance to take the oath of allegiance. It was never intended that they be given the chance to take that oath. Their fate was sealed and they were to be deported.

Let us go back now to the issue of the Crowns' responsibility in this matter, because there have been attempts to minimize or trivialize it. The deportation order read by Winslow to the men gathered in the church in Grand-Pré clearly stated that he was acting on the orders of His Majesty. How could it have been otherwise since the Board of Trade and the Massachusetts government simply did not have the means to implement a plan of this magnitude.

As a matter of fact, in 1754, the British Parliament voted subsidies of about one million pound sterling to the American colonies. In May 1755, Monckton arrived in Nova Scotia with 2,000 men, while Admiral Boscawen and his fleet sailed into Halifax harbour in July of the same year. Everything was in place for the operation to start.

In spite of Prime Minister William Pitt's symbolic imprecations, London allowed the deportation to continue until the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1763. Both Charles Lawrence and Robert Monckton were respectively promoted to the positions of Governor and Lieutenant-governor of Nova Scotia in 1756, positions they held for several more years.

How can one seriously maintain that, for nearly eight years, London was unaware of what was happening in its American colonies, especially since this was a large-scale operation, which not limited to Nova Scotia but which also affected the people of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island—or Île Saint Jean, as it was called

### *Private Members' Business*

at the time—and Cape Breton Island—then Isle Royale—and the many colonies to which these destitute and downtrodden people were deported.

I know that I am running out of time. I will therefore conclude by saying that there is nothing wrong with recognizing the facts for what they are. Far from reopening old wounds, which would inflame relations between Canada's two language communities, this recognition would lay the foundations for true reconciliation between the two main language communities of this country.

I would like to express my appreciation in closing to a number of people who have supported me in this entire undertaking since 1999, and have helped me keep the debate going. These include my assistants, both past and present: Patrick Frigon, Mireille Beaudin, Luc Malo and Jean-François Bisailon. Then there are Euclide Chiasson, Denis Laplante of the la Société nationale de l'Acadie. Then there are Jean-Guy Rioux, Robert Thibault of the SANB, Jean-Guy Nadeau, the MLAs on both sides of the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly, Bernard Richard in particular. I am grateful as well to the Mayor of Caraquet, Antoine Landry, University of Maine professor Roger Paradis, David Le Gallant, chairman of the Musée acadien de l'Île du Prince-Édouard, Maurice Basque and Kenneth Breau of the Centre d'études acadiennes, and Warren Perrin, the Louisiana lawyer who started the ball rolling. Then, of course, there is my colleague for Acadie—Bathurst, without whom I would never have been able to progress as far as I have.

I commend him for his courage in standing up to be counted and, unlike the members across the floor there, supporting a member who supposedly did not have the right to deal with this issue because he is supposedly a separatist.

• (1900)

Yes, I am a Quebecker, but if I am one today it is because of a historic event, a turning point, which had a great impact on my family history and as a result of I live in Quebec today. Otherwise I would likely be living in a little village by the name of Sainte-Anne's Point on the Saint John River, known today as Fredericton.

I wish to particularly thank Fidèle Thériault, historian and president of the Société d'histoire de la rivière Saint-Jean.

In closing, I seek unanimous consent to have this motion made votable.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House for this motion to be made votable?

**Some hon. members:** Yes.

**Some hon. members:** No.

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired. As the motion has not been designated as a votable item, the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

It being 7 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

*Private Members' Business*

(The House adjourned at 7 p.m.)

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