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Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 18, 1996

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, wheat and barley producers in western Canada should be given greater flexibility and more choices by amending the Canadian Wheat Board Act to include a special two year opting out provision for those farmers interested in developing niche export markets.

He said: Mr. Speaker, over the past two years, but more recently, I have followed up on my many discussions with farmers in my riding of Wild Rose. I questioned the farmers, asking what they wanted me to do. The result is this motion. The farmers are asking for the opportunity to opt out of the Canadian Wheat Board for a period of two years in order to see how marketing their niche produce goes.

The question I put to the farmers was: "Should farmers be allowed to opt out of the Canadian Wheat Board?" and 835 said yes, 70 said no. That represents about 90 per cent of the returns. As well, I used information I picked up at different gatherings when I was talking to individual farmers at town halls. It was obvious to me that they desire this. They want the opportunity.

As elected officials I believe we are obligated to give them that opportunity. As the representative for Wild Rose I put forward this motion with the idea that possibly they could have that opportunity.

Let us make it perfectly clear right off the bat, before the Liberals send out any more documents from the Prime Minister's office, these 90 per cent or 835 farmers do not want to scrap the wheat board. Nor does the Reform Party of Canada want to scrap the wheat board. Let us make that perfectly clear before the Liberals send out any more of their dumb propaganda that tells the public what we are all about and it is not even close to the truth.

Neither the Reform Party of Canada nor the farmers of Wild Rose want to see the wheat board scrapped. What they are asking for is freedom of choice. Freedom is something that a democratic society expects, something that producers across the land expect. Unless, of course, you are a western prairie farmer of wheat and barley. Then you must do as the government says or face the mighty, heavy hand of the law.

Mr. Speaker, you know what law I am talking about. It is the law that puts violent criminals into alternative measures programs, the law that allows bail for sex offenders the very same day they commit the offence, the law that allows bail for other violent crimes. It is the same law that puts a man behind bars without bail for selling his own product in violation of the law of the Canadian Wheat Board, literally throwing away the key, the heavy hand of the law.

Clearly farmers across the prairies desire to have a choice in the way they market their grain. Clearly a plebiscite on the issue would be in order. The red book said there would be one. It has not happened though and most likely will not. After all, the results may turn out to be against what the agriculture minister believes. We could not have that now, could we? That is an obvious fact after the minister selected his hand-picked panel to study the issue of the wheat board. When some of its recommendations came back, if the minister did not agree with them, then that was that.

It is well past time for this place and this government to start listening to the people of this land, the people whom we are supposed to serve and not dictate to. For nearly 30 years this place has continually ignored the wishes of the people and does what it wants. It uses dictatorial methods to continue to ram legislation down our throats. I am one Canadian who is getting tired of that kind of attitude. This place really needs an attitude adjustment. We need the kind of adjustment that would make things a little different.

• (1110)

For example, if members listened to the Canadian people and paid attention to the petitions that land in this place, section 745 of the Criminal Code would disappear. But no, this place knows best, we always know best.

Over the past 30 years things have been absolutely thrown into this House, debated and passed which have been dead against the wishes of the Canadian people. Think of the GST days. I could

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even go as far back as the time the metric system was first brought in. Remember how the Canadian people felt about that? There are a number of measures I could mention. Rather than listening to the Canadian people and trying to implement legislation that is pleasing to them, we shove it down their throats.

Many have said that those who support choice are young farmers who do not understand. Gordon Reed of Cremona, Alberta, Jack Morgan and Nels Eskenson of Sundre, Alberta along with scores of other long time farmers, those who began farming before there ever was a wheat board, are the very ones who tell me they want choice. They all stated that what was good in 1946 is not what is needed in 1996, and they want some change.

In 1993 when the open barley market was put in place, not only was there a tremendous upswing in the sales of barley by private entrepreneurs, but the board as well experienced an increase in sales and profits. Actually the competition was probably healthy for it. It got off its backside, went out and began to do a little selling, a little promoting, and it worked.

Many niche producers are looking for buyers of their products and are finding markets for their specialty. One of these specialties is chemical free barley. These markets are not met by the buyers the board is aware of and have contact with. But these buyers do have a number of contacts with these niche producers and would very much like to purchase certified chemical free grains. Creating natural food for consumption would be their whole idea. There is a growing demand for that kind of product.

No organic producer receives sales help from the wheat board so why should they not be allowed to search on their own? There are a number of good reasons why farmers as entrepreneurs should be able to seek out and sell to their own markets, and that is just one of them.

When they go out, they work the land side by side with members of their families, and they try to produce something that they find is increasingly in demand. They try to meet the expectations of the buyers they have in mind who they were able to find on their own. Then they cannot sell them the product. It must go through the wheat board, and the best price they can expect from the wheat board are feed barley prices. It gets very discouraging. Many people who are out doing these very things are working for the livelihood of their families and are striving hard to save their farms from going under during tough times.

It is time for the government to look at modern times, at the modern way of doing things. We would like to see the wheat board democratized. We have said that on many occasions and I will repeat it once again so there is no confusion on that side. We do not want to scrap the wheat board. No one in the Reform Party has ever said that, nor has it ever been part of our platform.

• (1115)

We do need some changes. The wheat board needs to be more producer driven and more producer sensitive. We need to stop patronage appointments to those kinds of positions. An elected board is needed, one that is elected by the producers to serve the producers, to go out into the world to look for those new markets, not just the global market and whatever price is set by the global market, but to get out and do some work and search and find those kinds of markets that would benefit those people who are working so hard.

We need a body of people who have open books and who are accountable to the people of Canada. I really find it strange that we can get no information whatsoever regarding revenues, costs, expenses and what is happening at the wheat board. It is an absolute closed society. If that is the norm of a democratic country, then we really need some changes.

The Reform Party has tried in the past to make this kind of an item votable. There are criteria for what makes a private member's motion or bill a votable item. If the material that we submit regarding the motion or the bill follows the criteria right to the letter, follows it so that all 12 requirements to make it votable are in place, then it should be votable.

There are members on both sides of the House who have introduced private member's bills and have come away wondering why their item has not been made a votable one. If the criteria and the regulations are in place and all the rules are followed, then it should be a votable item and we should be able to stand in this House to cast our votes on behalf of the people we represent.

I have often wondered why that does not happen, that when these things do meet the criteria they still are not votable. There is only one conclusion we can come to. It is because of a few people sitting in the front row on that side of the House. If they decide something should or should not happen, then that is the way it is. That is democracy in this land.

They will come into this place of debate, turn around and look at the 177 members on the benches behind them and tell them: "This is the way you will vote. If you do not vote that way, we will kick you out of the party". I am sure the Speaker knows what I am talking about. I also believe that when people are forced to do what they do not want to do with respect to the legislation that comes before this House, when they are not given an opportunity to have their say, that is not democracy.

The agriculture minister has promised a plebiscite. Why has there not been one? Is it truly because the results will be unfavourable to what the government has already decided should happen?

This place really needs an attitude adjustment. It is time we started listening to the people who pay us. It is their money which brings us here. It is their money which lets us sit here to debate these issues. It is their money which helps us to decide what we

should do on their behalf. Consequently we come out of here making decisions daily on what we think is best and ignore their wishes completely. That has to change.

I would like to give the members of this House an opportunity today to change that attitude, to give the people of Canada and the prairie farmers of western Canada the opportunity to truly be entrepreneurs so that they can sell their products in the market which is best for them and have the freedom to do it. We could do that by making this a votable motion and giving every member of this House an opportunity to truly represent what Canadians would like to see. It is with that thought in mind and with the consent of the House I would ask that this motion be made votable.

• (1120)

The Deputy Speaker: Colleagues, the member for Wild Rose has moved that this motion be votable. Is there unanimous consent?

An hon. member: No.

The Deputy Speaker: There is not unanimous consent. Accordingly, we will resume debate.

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the premise of this motion is that the Canadian Wheat Board and the legislation it supports lack flexibility and cannot serve the best interests of its clients. The record does not support that premise. It is a retreat of a previous motion that was brought forward in June. The premise is flawed.

The purpose of a two-year opting out provision contained in today's motion appears to be a return to the motion made in June by the hon. member and his colleagues. I would suggest that the letter of this motion does not match its spirit if, as the hon. member's motion suggests, this desire is an outcome that produces benefits for producers when what we are talking about is consensus and careful actions.

The Canadian Wheat Board has demonstrated a desire to expand its accountability to farmers. In return the board and the marketing system it maintains enjoy the support of a clear majority of our primary producers. This support is not unconditional. It reflects the commitment of the Canadian Wheat Board to improve service and organizational renewal. These efforts will be aided by the government.

We are taking steps to ensure that the Canadian Wheat Board keeps pace with the needs of its clients. As set out by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food in his October 7, 1996 policy statement, the government aims to renew and strengthen the wheat board.

There will be changes to the management of the Canadian Wheat Board. A board of directors will be appointed by the government in 1997 and that group will have a majority of producer representa-

tives. This interim body will give way to elected members in 1998 which will also have a producer majority.

The necessary amendments to the legislation are expected to be tabled in the House before the Christmas break. With these changes the future mandate of the Canadian Wheat Board can be adjusted in a democratic fashion according to the preferences of prairie grain farmers. The way the board does business will also be improved with changes designed to make price systems more flexible, payment processes quicker, a change on the bottom line so to speak.

The hon. member's motion also speaks of developing niche markets for grain. Talk of such niche markets must begin with the recognition that markets are inherently unpredictable, more so when there are no stable influences in those markets such as those provided by a single desk seller. We cannot discuss niches without reference to the large markets and the forces that shape those markets.

The presence of the Canadian Wheat Board has meant price stability and security of markets. The potential of niches for individual producers nowadays is traceable in no small part to the work of the board on behalf of the wider community of producers.

One might argue that the business environment in grain markets achieved through the Canadian Wheat Board has contributed to the potential of niche markets. It has also ironically led to the mistaken view taken by some of the board's harsher critics that the board is an obstacle. It certainly is not. The Canadian Wheat Board actually pursues many niche markets throughout the world.

There is a real possibility that having both a single desk marketing system in the form of the Canadian Wheat Board and the arrangement envisioned by the proponents on the right to opt out of the system may actually deliver the worst of both worlds to our producers. We would have a wheat board with reduced leverage in the marketplace and thus greater exposure to producers to violate market forces that can drive down prices and drive down profits for all Canadian farmers.

• (1125)

The message from farmers themselves is clear: You may be able to opt out of the wheat board system but you will not be able to opt out of the consequences that could result in harsh action. What is to be done in the marketplace is not easily undone or turned about. Returning to the benefits of a proven marketing system is not assured once you have been given the problems that could exist with two marketing systems.

Furthermore, the pursuit of opportunities by a few may reduce the opportunities of the many. That is plainly going to be a concern of those who make their livelihood producing grain in Canada. In some ideal world we can wish for perfect win-win situations but we

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do not live in such a world. If the pursuit of alternative marketing arrangements by the minority determines or diminishes the benefits of single desk selling for the majority, then it is not a win-win situation, it is a lose-lose situation.

Long before the hon. member offered this motion for debate today, before he was even a member of this House, the Canadian Wheat Board took the initiative of evaluating itself and its operations, demonstrating a flexibility that we can applaud. Certainly the wheat board has always been committed to providing the best possible service for western Canadian grain farmers. In recent years that commitment has led to some very critical re-examination and re-evaluation.

In recent years the board has reviewed its operation and management structures in order to improve its long term planning, budgeting, management and reporting systems. In addition it has also introduced a new system of performance evaluation. It would have been enough for some, had the wheat board stopped there, to say that the Canadian Wheat Board was neither complacent nor unwilling to meet the challenges of the changing times, but as the House knows, the wheat board undertook further measures.

The board now conducts an ongoing department by department audit of its expenditures. It has expanded the information it provides to its producer clients. It has also emphasized direct contact between its staff and clients. The men and women on the prairies who produce wheat and barley are better informed today. At its most fundamental level, these people are the western Canadian grain farmers and the western Canadian grain industry itself.

Over the past few years new services have been provided to these women and men on the prairies, new services such as pool return outlooks and price forecasting, new market development initiatives and business tools for enhanced risk management. The board has also strengthened its worldwide business information networks and opened a new office in the People's Republic of China.

In summary, the Canadian Wheat Board has met the test of organized managing in tumultuous times. It has adapted, adopted and improved in order to provide the best possible service for its clients. The board and its management have made great strides in meeting the needs of its clients and the challenges of global markets in the late 20th century. All this has been accomplished within the existing legal framework of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Amending the act is necessary in certain ways to put the Canadian Wheat Board on an even better business footing and to meet the demands of the western Canadian grain farmers for more accountable management. This can easily be distinguished from

the kind of amendment contained in the hon. member's motion which does not contribute to the modernization of the wheat board. This motion also fails to meet the test of proposing change that has broad base support among the western Canadian grain farmers and that can dramatically improve sales of wheat and barley to its customers.

• (1130)

The motion put forth by the hon. member for Wild Rose does not recognize the flexibility and benefits of both the Canadian Wheat Board and the legislation underlying it. I do not share his presumption. I choose to support the farmers and the institutions and reject the motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Landry (Lotbinière, BQ): I welcome this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to speak on the motion put forward by the hon. member for the Reform Party, who persists in advocating a provision that would allow producers to opt out of the Canadian Wheat Board for two years.

What baffles me, however, is the fact that my hon. colleague still does not understand plain common sense. I recall speaking on this issue in this House on June 19. The hon. member for the Reform Party was probably away on that day. And he obviously does not read *Hansard*.

For the last time, I sincerely hope that the Reformers will realize that it is not a good idea to allow Canadian wheat and barley producers to opt out for a period of two years. This is not the first time that the Reformers have taken a stand against the Canadian Wheat Board. I talked about this on June 19. This is starting to look like sheer stubbornness.

The Reformers are at such a loss for new issues to make political hay with that they are rehashing an old matter that has already been debated in this House. It was discussed last June. Why are they coming back with this two-year opting-out proposal or provision for western producers? I can understand that the Reformers feel that a general election is coming and realizing that they are not very popular. They are trying to make political hay with this clause.

The Canadian Wheat Board is the institutional embodiment of a marketing system developed to help producers. The pooling of resources through the Canadian Wheat Board ensures that producers receive the same initial payments year round. As for the final payment, it is designed to reflect the value set by the market during a given crop year. This means that the pool price is representative of the price variations.

There is a whole system in place to calculate prices depending on the grain category, thereby easing—fortunately for western produc-

ers—fluctuations, some of which are linked to foreign competition. The hon. members of the third party have short memories. In the 1980s, western grain producers definitely benefited from the Canadian Wheat Board.

After certain pools accumulated huge deficits, the federal government came to the rescue. Now some producers are smelling business opportunities. I realize that some want to market their products themselves, outside the board's jurisdiction, because they want to get more. However, when times become hard again, they will be happy to be part of the Canadian Wheat Board.

In a way, Reformers want to eliminate a system which works relatively well, for the benefit of a small group of western producers. Producers that would elect to take advantage of this opting out provision would be allowed to leave the Canadian Wheat Board for a period of two years. However, after this two-year period, will producers be able to rejoin or, for that matter, will they have to rejoin the Canadian Wheat Board? Who will monitor the process and how? This new system would make it very difficult for the board to fulfill its mandate.

The objective is to stabilize prices and set a median price, in spite of market cycles. Everyone is looking for stability, but the Reformers would turn the whole thing into a big mess. It would indeed be the case, should the Canadian Wheat Board disappear, because western producers would suffer major losses of income. They would no longer have any protection.

• (1135)

As you know, no one can predict the future. Who can say what the supply and demand in a given region of the world will be? The proposal of the hon. member for Wild Rose would undermine the principles of price pooling and risk reduction, while creating a parallel marketing system.

The Reform member and his colleagues will probably insist that they are following up on the producers' request. In my opinion, this is only a small group of producers who are either dissatisfied or who want to make more money. It is tempting for producers located along the Canada-U.S. border to sell their crops directly to the Americans and to get paid immediately.

Indeed, it is very tempting and this is why some producers want to go it alone. However, the wind might turn. Economic conditions, fluctuations and many other factors can, at any time, change the whole situation. Going that route would be tantamount to playing Russian roulette, and the consequences could be just as tragic.

The Canadian Wheat Board must be maintained, because it is a good instrument for western producers. The board has already demonstrated its usefulness. It may not be perfect, but nothing keeps us from improving it. For example, producers could be granted more control over the board's operations, or the board could be given more room to maneuver.

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The proposal by the member for Wild Rose would undo many years of work by the industry towards maximizing profits from the sale of wheat. The introduction of a provision allowing producers to opt out of the marketing system for two years would seriously undermine the Canadian Wheat Board.

The board has been in existence for 61 years. Over that period of time there have obviously been many changes and marketing has undergone a considerable transformation. However, the fundamental task continues to be one of selling a quality product and offering clients outstanding service, while maximizing profits for western producers. One thing remains unchanged, and that is that grain marketing is just as risky a venture today as it was in 1935 when the Canadian Wheat Board was set up.

Back then, producers had to contend with price fluctuations caused by World War II, while today's producers, like all their fellow producers, have no influence over world prices.

The Canadian Wheat Board continues to provide producers with a means of managing risk and a system for ensuring equity among grain producers. The approach is the same as that used in other agricultural sectors.

Once again, the motion by the member for Wild Rose must be rejected, and I hope members of the Reform Party will change their minds.

I think it would make more sense if we talked about creating jobs. Has any thought been given to the jobs that could be created with the money that would be saved by abolishing the Senate? I hope that my colleagues in this House are finally going to talk about the real problems, and about job creation. The dignity of thousands of the young and the not so young is at stake.

Many of the inhabitants of my riding are looking for jobs. Many have looked in vain. As recently as yesterday, November 17, one of my constituents said that his unemployment insurance benefits had melted away like snow on a warm day, leaving him with little choice but to go on welfare, although he is in good health and wants to work.

• (1140)

I am sure I am not the only member who hears from people looking for work. This is a situation affecting a good many Quebecers and Canadians.

I trust that we will move on to the topic of jobs in this House in the very near future. In the meantime, I thank you for your attention.

[*English*]

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be speaking today in support of the motion presented by the hon. member for Wild Rose:

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That, in the opinion of this House, wheat and barley producers in western Canada should be given greater flexibility and more choices by amending the Canadian Wheat Board Act to include a special two year opting out provision for those farmers interested in developing niche export markets.

I thank the hon. member for bringing this up. I am not saying this is necessarily the only way we can deal with the end of the Canadian Wheat Board monopoly, which is what many farmers are asking for. But this certainly is one alternative that should be debated. Before I get into that debate I will comment on some of the comments by the hon. member from the Bloc who just spoke.

He asked why we were not debating something important. I have barley in the bin and out in the field to be sold right now. To me this issue is important. I have neighbours who have barley in the field and barley to be sold. To them this issue is very important. In fact, to thousands and thousands of western Canadian farmers this issue is very important.

I have come to know the hon. member from the Bloc and I have gained some respect for him over the past three years, but I find it absolutely unbelievable that he would brush this issue off as an issue that is not important. It is important. It is important to many western Canadian farmers.

Back to the motion at hand, I would like to ask some questions. For example, why is the minister of agriculture denying farmers a third option on the ballot that will give farmers a chance to speak in the plebiscite promised by the minister?

In this plebiscite only two options are offered to farmers. I will read the questions and make clear what these two options are. Then I will talk about a third option which should be on the ballot. The first option is the open market option which is stated as follows: "Remove all barley, both feed and malting food, from the Canadian Wheat Board and place it entirely on the open market for all domestic and export sales". That is the first option and that is the wording the minister will use to present this option.

The second option is the single seller option: "Maintain the Canadian Wheat Board as a single desk seller for all barley, both feed and malting food, with the continuing exception of feed barley sold domestically".

Those options are two out of the three options that should be on this ballot. Unfortunately the minister has denied western Canadian farmers the option that a vast majority of them would choose. I know this not only from polling I have done on my own, not only from the polling of other Reform members in their own constituencies, but from other polls that have been commissioned on this issue. Poll after poll has shown that a majority of Canadian farmers if given the choice would choose the dual marketing option or the voluntary board option, call it what you like.

In a plebiscite held in Alberta about a year ago, when the question was put to western Canadian farmers, two-thirds of the farmers in Alberta chose the voluntary board or the dual marketing option.

• (1145)

This issue has been decided in Alberta already. It should be put to plebiscite for the benefit of farmers in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. However, let us present the option that farmers would choose. What kind of nonsense is this, offering only two options which will split western Canadian farmers and pit family against family? Only asking the two questions will do that.

How will farmers handle having only the two options presented? I cannot say for sure but I can make a pretty good guess. My guess is that farmers, on recognizing that the dual marketing option is not available, may choose the open market option. In that case the wheat board will no longer be handling barley sales at all. That is not what I want, that is not what other Reform MPs want and it is not what farmers across western Canada want. They want the freedom to choose to market their barley through the Canadian Wheat Board, through a pooling system, or to market it on their own or through a private grain company. That is the third option which is not on the ballot of the minister of agriculture.

I am afraid, because that option is not on the ballot, that farmers in western Canada might be denied the pooling option, an option which I know some of them want. That is nonsense.

Why did the minister not put this third option on the ballot? I cannot answer that question for sure but it concerns me greatly that he did not offer it. Would not the proper way to handle this issue be to present the three options? The reason the minister of agriculture gives for not putting that voluntary board or dual marketing option on the plebiscite is that it would not work. Would not the proper way to handle this issue be to put it on the ballot and to have a debate across western Canada? The minister, the wheat board and other people who argue that a dual marketing system would not work could debate that option. They could say: "We do not think that option would work for these reasons". That is a point of debate.

On the other hand, I could argue that it would work and that is what I would do during the debate leading up to the plebiscite. I would argue that in fact the Canadian Wheat Board, when it was set up, was a voluntary board. The dual marketing system was in place from the time the board was first set up in the twenties and re-established in the thirties. The voluntary board or the dual marketing option was only taken away from farmers under the War Measures Act in 1943. That was done so the Canadian government could obtain for the war effort grain at the lowest price possible. Canadian farmers allowed that because they wanted to help with

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the war. They were promised compensation later which they never received.

Why do we still have a monopoly situation today when it was only put in place under the War Measures Act? It is to get cheap grain. I would argue in the debate leading up to the plebiscite that the dual market system worked well before the monopoly was put in place and that it would work well now.

I want to make it as clear as I can that I favour keeping the Canadian Wheat Board. It is very useful. However, I favour giving farmers a choice. Surely in country like this no one could argue seriously that farmers who put all of the money, the sweat and the work into producing their grain should not have the freedom to choose how to market that grain. Yet, that is what the government and the minister are arguing against all common sense. It makes no sense whatsoever.

• (1150)

I have so much that I want to say on this issue, but I see that my time is coming to a close. However, if I may, I would like to again make it clear what I am arguing for here.

The hon. member for Wild Rose is asking that farmers be given the chance to opt out over a two-year period. It is one way of ending the wheat board monopoly. But there are other ways the monopoly could be ended and make it work effectively.

One way would be to offer deferred delivery contracts such as that which grain companies now offer to farmers, unlike the Canadian Wheat Board contracts that are in place now which do not guarantee a price for the commodity and do not guarantee delivery by a certain date. It is a one-sided contract.

The deferred delivery contract which farmers use for canola, peas, or other crops of choice, stipulates that farmers will deliver a certain number of bushels or tonnes of the commodity to a specified delivery point for such a price on such a date. The grain company promises to take delivery at the specified price, destination and date. That is another way to end the monopoly of the board.

A third way is by offering contracts, committing a certain number of tonnes or bushels to the board so that the board would know exactly what it will be working with before the actual marketing. That commitment can be made some time in advance and staged in. That is another way to deal with the issue. Give farmers a choice. I cannot believe that the government in good conscience can continue to deny farmers the choice on how to market their grain.

In conclusion, I want to again thank the hon. member for Wild Rose for his motion and say that I support it as one way to deal with ending the monopoly of the wheat board. I also point out that there

are other ways of dealing with the situation. I say very clearly that a voluntary board has worked before, a dual marketing system has worked before, and it will work again. I ask the minister to examine this again.

Mrs. Marlene Cowling (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the context of debating the motion before the House, it is worth remembering the consultation process that preceded the report of the western grain marketing panel.

The report was presented to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food on July 2, 1996 after much direct consultation, independent research and careful deliberation. The panel produced a brochure that described the current grain marketing system and outlined some of the major related issues. This was distributed to over 200,000 farmers, organizations and industry representatives in December 1995. This information was only the first step in an extensive dialogue.

The panel then provided a number of avenues for interested individuals and groups to review the grain marketing system and they were able to put forward their views and offer suggestions for changes in the marketing system. Clearly the panel made good on its commitment to foster an atmosphere of fairness and impartiality in which people could meet to discuss the future of the grain marketing system.

As part of the consultation exercise that was the most extensive in the history of the industry, a series of 15 town hall meetings was held across Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. I attended two of those meetings in my home province of Manitoba, one in Brandon and one in my home town of Grandview which is in my riding of Dauphin—Swan River. It was in this kind of forum that farmers and other concerned people gave their perspective on both the current marketing system for western Canadian grain and alternative arrangements. The panel also held hearings in Winnipeg, Regina and Edmonton where individuals and organizations made formal presentations. In 12 days of hearings the panel heard 69 briefs. There were also 78 written submissions from individuals and organizations that did not appear before the panel during its hearings.

• (1155)

As well, to help in its assessment of the grain marketing system, its institutions and the economic environment in which this important industry operates, the panel contracted consultants to produce six major reports.

Clearly the western grain marketing panel made a valuable contribution in facilitating an important debate concerning the future of the Canadian Wheat Board and the grain marketing system. Key issues were explored and the panel's recommenda-

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tions were added to the input received by the government from producers and other interested parties. Taken together, this input has helped the government chart its course concerning the future of the board.

The government supports the way the Canadian Wheat Board has evolved into a body where key decisions affecting farmers in this industry have been made by the farmers themselves and are based on a consensus which they themselves built. At the same time the government is proposing to the future modernization of the administrative structure of the board, to make its operations more flexible and effective and to put more power in the hands of primary producers.

The policy statement issued by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food on October 7, 1996 calls for a board of directors for the Canadian Wheat Board to be appointed by the government in 1997, a board with a farmer majority. By 1998 directors will be directly elected by farmers. This proposal reflects the common goal of both the western grain marketing panel and the government, providing western Canadian farmers with the best ways and means to achieve the maximum possible benefits for their industry.

To help the board better serve its clients, new legislation to be introduced shortly will also enable the board to use its financial resources in a more business-like manner. This will permit the board and farmers more flexibility in financial dealings. Specifically, payments to farmers will be easier to make and quicker to deliver. This promotes a better business environment for the industry. Avoidable bottlenecks and other delays in doing business with and on behalf of farmers can be removed to everyone's benefit.

Once the new governance structure is in place, the government will be able to look to the Canadian Wheat Board's board of directors for guidance on issues regarding the industry. In the meantime the government has committed itself to a producer vote on the subject of the marketing system for barley.

The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food has clearly said that he has heard from farm groups on how to formulate the question and a voter eligibility list. The aim is to ask farmers a clear question on the marketing of barley. It will be an important choice because the future of the industry will be shaped in this process. Again, this follows the route of a broad consultation instead of pre-empting debate.

During the western grain marketing panel consultations, farmers demonstrated a strong desire to shape their industry themselves. The motion before the House today proposes a different route, one that I believe should be rejected. It pre-empts a wider consultation on a very important issue and proposes to make an important choice over the heads of farmers.

I strongly oppose this motion. It undercuts the strengths of the Canadian Wheat Board as well as the credibility of prairie grain

farmers. This motion clearly illustrates the extremist views of the third party of this House of Commons.

The Deputy Speaker: As there are no other members rising to debate, the hon. member for Wild Rose is entitled to get up and resume the debate if he so wishes. May we call it twelve o'clock?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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[*Translation*]

GREAT LAKES REGION OF AFRICA

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.) moved:

That this House take note of the evolving situation in the Great Lakes region of Africa and of Canada's leadership role in the international community's efforts to alleviate human suffering in the region.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the honourable Leader of the Opposition, the leader of the Reform Party, the leader of the New Democratic Party and the leader of the Conservative Party for their co-operation during last week's discussions on the urgency of the situation in Zaire. This is certainly a great example of how the members of this Parliament work together to ensure a unified position with respect to the very serious crisis unfolding in that part of the world. We are certainly most interested in the debates that will be held in the coming days in order to determine the direction and the initiatives to be taken with respect to the missions to Zaire, and also to ensure that the voices of each party in this Parliament, which represents the Canadian people, are heard.

[*English*]

The purpose of this is to bring before Parliament the resolution seeking support for the Canadian initiative in eastern Zaire and the surrounding regions.

It was about eight days ago when the entire world, including all Canadians, recognized that we stood on the precipice of one of the most tragic human disasters the world has ever faced. Millions of people were sitting in eastern Zaire without any food, sustenance or support. There was enormous potential for the whole crisis to develop into a situation of huge significance, not just in the region but for everyone. The prospect of a humanitarian disaster shook us all.

In the circumstances, a week ago Saturday the Prime Minister, consulting with a number of other world leaders, took an initiative

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in line with what we believe is the long Canadian tradition of involvement as a major peacekeeper to stop the stalemate, to change the inertia that was taking place at an international level. There was a need for political will to take place.

We have learned, as we have gone through these new kinds of crises in the last several years, that the resources are there, the capacity is there and the institutions are there, but what is often missing is the political will. Last weekend the Prime Minister supplied that missing ingredient and took the initiative to begin mobilizing the world community.

Since then, of course, events have taken place rapidly. We were able to bring together a coalition of a number of countries prepared to offer direct assistance for a multinational force which would provide a secure environment within eastern Zaire to ensure that any humanitarian aid could be effectively delivered and at the same time to support and facilitate the voluntary repatriation and movement of refugees back to their homes in Rwanda.

In addition to that, political support had to be mobilized at the United Nations to get the right kind of resolution. Without going into the long history, although it was just a short time ago, Canada took the lead in this important international coalition building. Canada was able to garner the support of a number of countries which were prepared to commit and to mobilize political support at the United Nations. On the weekend just past we were able to obtain the full endorsement of the United Nations security council.

• (1205)

I want to give my vote of appreciation to the leaders of each of the respective other parties in the House. I spoke to them last week to explain the kind of urgency and the quick changing circumstances we faced. We received both their basic support and willingness to wait until the House returned on Monday to have a full debate which we are committed to. I want to thank them very much for signifying and expressing their own commitment during this very tumultuous period this past week.

We now see that the situation has changed. We should take enormous satisfaction that one of the major objectives that was set out just a short week ago was to ensure that the large masses of refugees held in camps and who had been a part of that system for the last two years are now on the move. The dramatic pictures we see every night on television clearly demonstrate that one of the major objectives has already in large part been achieved.

One of the contributing reasons, one of the factors that unlocked or triggered that movement was that in the past week our own country took on the responsibility of organizing the international community. The international community's presence that would soon be felt became a strong and compelling influence in terms of that massive movement that we now witness daily. In part we can

take a certain amount of satisfaction that the job is already under way, but we should also recognize the job is not yet over.

At last report there are still hundreds of thousands of refugees in eastern Zaire. We hope that they will be able to join the movement that was started on the weekend, but at this point in time there is no way of knowing. We are still trying to assess the information intelligence with regard to the refugees in the southern part of Zaire around the area of Bukavu. The objectives still remain and they have the UN security resolution force behind them to ensure that humanitarian assistance is given. At the same time we are able to support and facilitate the continual resettlement of refugees back into their home communes.

In this case we still stay committed as the Canadian government on behalf of the Canadian people to do whatever is necessary to meet the current needs. We continue to support these developments and provide any resource necessary to not only ensure the application of humanitarian aid but to look at the broader question of peace building in the region so that we will not have a reoccurrence, that the same problems will not visit us again a year or two down the road and to begin working for longer term settlements of the root causes of the problems.

We seek the support of Parliament today for the initiative of Canada as we seek to find the most effective and useful ways in which we can respond to the humanitarian crisis in Rwanda and Zaire.

To put this into context and why I think this is particularly important as a juncture point in debate, we have witnessed since the ending of the cold war several years ago the emergence of not uniform global peace but a new kind of conflict, low intensity conflicts, often internal conflicts, but which have a nasty way of spilling over their boundaries, creating enormous repercussions in their own regions around the world at great cost to life and resources in those regions and for which we all bear the burden. It is the new kind of world we live in.

As we begin to learn our lessons day by day, week by week, as we go through each of these conflicts, we now begin to apply those lessons in an effective way. If we do not do so we will see the continuing cycles of violence, the targeting of whole communities one against the another, the ugly words that appear in our vocabulary, ethnic cleansing and genocide, that have become all too common in our parlance.

We have to continue to be cognizant of the enormous despair of hundreds of thousands of civilians who are the victims of these conflicts, the women and children who bear the brunt and who often are the most vulnerable and cannot protect themselves against these kinds of internal conflicts, faction fights and the enormous violence we have witnessed for so long.

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• (1210)

Clearly, traditional responses are not enough. The lessons we acquired in our diplomatic, political and military textbooks on the cold war do not apply to the new situations.

One of the first lessons we learned is that these internal conflicts are “not a family matter”. Given their effect on international security as a whole, given the widespread consequences brought about by these matters, as we have seen just in the past week, it is incumbent on and the responsibility of the international community to find the appropriate response.

We cannot use narrow national interests as an excuse for inaction or delay. It is a matter for all common humanity. I believe that is the will of Canadians to serve as a steward in that cause of humanity.

[*Translation*]

The Prime Minister went to the core of the issue last week when he said that no one can remain indifferent to the suffering in eastern Zaire, no one can close his eyes to the consequences. If the world community does not act, more than a million lives will be at stake.

[*English*]

I think that summarizes basically why we have taken the role and the leadership that we have.

Third, we have learned that what is basically required is no longer the singular responses of just military force or political action. We now have to find an integrated, strategic, comprehensive way of melding political, military and humanitarian efforts so that there is a complete and total response, that we are able to be flexible and provide adaptations, that we can no longer simply go by the old guidebooks.

We now must find notions of combining peacekeeping in its traditional form as established by Michael Pearson many years ago but also with a new concept of peace building, how we work into post-conflict situations to have stabilized communities.

The medical community has a good word for it, triage. If you are a casualty in a traffic accident and you come to the hospital, they do not immediately perform the operation. They stabilize the vital signs. They make sure the blood is pumping. They make sure the body is warm and things are stabilized before they can start the treatment and the cure. One of the new lessons we have learned and the required lessons is to begin seeing how we can provide that triage in these new kinds of international conflicts.

Specifically as it applies to Zaire, we face a situation that challenges all these lessons that we have learned in this new conflict situation, how to provide innovative responses to the new kinds of humanitarian crises. I think we have already shown one important lesson and that is to quickly and effectively use political

will and mobilization to bring the international community toward finding a solution.

I would recommend to all members, if they have the time, to read a dramatic report that was issued after the Rwanda conflict which stated that the missing link that led to the genocide was a lack of political will at the international level. That will was supplied over the past week. I am pleased to say that it was the Canadian Prime Minister who provided that basic sense of commitment and engagement to make it happen.

As a result, the scope of the disaster has been substantially reduced. However, we now have to make adaptations. We are now seeing the vast movement of refugees coming across the border as a consequence of that galvanizing of the international area. However, there is still an urgent need for humanitarian assistance to sustainable solutions.

My colleague, the Minister for International Co-operation, will be addressing in more detail how on the humanitarian side we can begin to support work by the various international agencies and care groups that are involved in that region.

We must be prepared to continue to do what we can to ensure that there is continued security. At the present moment we are gathering the information intelligence, working with our allies, working with the African states, the Europeans and the Americans to ensure that in eastern Zaire itself that as the problem begins to be resolved, we also do not see remaining pockets where there is still continued violence, insecurity or instability.

• (1215)

We are beginning to look at how we can meet the objectives but perhaps use a different mix of tools. I hope members of Parliament will be prepared to work with us in developing that ongoing adaptation and adjustment as we move into new fields.

I welcome the response of members of Parliament on the usefulness of setting up regular joint meetings of the defence and foreign affairs committees. Then we can constantly brief members of Parliament from all parties, get their responses and build them in as part of our ongoing policy making and our response mechanism. I put that proposal out and I hope the spokespersons for the opposition parties will indicate whether they would be prepared to engage in that kind of ongoing parliamentary dialogue.

To make sure we have it, Canadian military personnel are now in Rwanda. General Baril will arrive there within hours to do the major reconnaissance. They will help to give us a much better understanding of the situation in the region and how that will affect our deployment plans.

The consultations I talked about are intensifying. There will be a major planning session in Stuttgart within two days which will bring together all the donor nations. We are in constant contact and have been over the weekend with a number of the key players, with

those who are prepared to donate and contribute to the force and with those who represent the African states.

I will be meeting with the ambassadors of the African states later today to engage them in the same kind of consultation and response so we can calibrate and tailor our responses to fit the needs, because that is our primary objective. We have also asked our Secretary of State for Latin America and Africa to visit Africa. She is on her way now to visit certain African capitals, to consult again with the key African states about what they think would be the appropriate response.

It is a continuing involvement. We on behalf of Canadians want to ensure we have the capacity and are in the position to offer the leadership that was initiated last weekend by the Prime Minister.

We must now recognize that a conversion is taking place. The movement of refugees in its own way is a source of enormous satisfaction. It is beginning to deal with one of the root causes of the problem, but there are still issues to face down the road. There is the longer term question of the resettlement of the refugees back into Rwanda. The millions of people now returning to their homelands have to be given basic support and sustenance.

We have to ensure there is proper monitoring in that area so the communities can come together, so there can be reconciliation and development in those areas. That will also involve a continuing ongoing commitment of the international community. We will do our part and offer whatever leadership is required to help deal with those kinds of issues and develop responses.

Last weekend in Paris during a meeting on Bosnia I engaged several of my counterparts as foreign ministers about how we can begin to think through those longer term responses and how we can begin to develop an effective international response to that changing condition.

The United Nations Security Council has also recognized very clearly the need for a follow-up force. Planning is already under way for a second phase as to how we should maintain a system of stability to ensure the problems do not recur. There is a lesson out of the past situations in Rwanda, Somalia and other areas. If we simply say that the immediate crisis is over and that we can now walk away, then we are bound to face a recurrence of the problem within months or years.

For that reason the United Nations has special envoy Ambassador Chrétien working in the region not only to deal with the immediate questions of negotiation about the humanitarian crisis but to make recommendations that will be used by the United Nations, ourselves and other countries to begin planning that longer term response. Again we can take some satisfaction in

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having received a call from the United Nations with a request that Canada find a proper envoy. We all admire enormously the work of Ambassador Chrétien. There is no one better suited for the task in the work he is doing there to provide international leadership at this crucial time.

In addition to those direct initiatives, I put forward another idea in a speech I gave about three weeks ago at York University. I am sure all members read it as soon as it came off the press.

• (1220)

The need for a peace building strategy by Canada was put forward. It is a need to begin to look differently at some of these kinds of problems; that within our own resources and our own political capacity, how we can provide support for countries emerging out of conflict; how we can provide the ability to help them stabilize so that the problems do not return with frequency.

The issue of Zaire is a good example of how peace building, a rapid, integrated, multifaceted response on the civilian side is as important as the rapid multifaceted response on the military side. We now have to find a forum for the same kind of effectiveness by the civilian peacekeeping side, which we now call peace building, as we have had on the military side.

This means providing assistance to re-establish the rule of law. It means supporting political reconciliation, including the issue of human rights, particularly minority rights. It means developing confidence building measures between the groups and factions that have been in conflict, designed to defuse tensions on the borders, across the borders and among people within those borders.

It means securing an environment so that the continued humanitarian assistance and rebuilding can take place. People cannot go about rebuilding their lives if they are worried that they will be attacked at any moment. That is why one major commitment we have made in places like Haiti is to provide training and support for the establishment of national police forces using public accountability and a sense of transparency so that those countries can begin to acquire that sense of security.

It means the massive problem of resettlement and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons and the reconstruction of a political and civil society in many of these countries. That is the new notion of peace building: how to use our own experiences as a country which has learned how to build bridges across boundaries; a country which has learned how to build a linkage between groups with different languages and different backgrounds; how to use the experiences we have gained internationally over the years to form these kinds of coalitions and alliances; how we begin to work with other like-minded countries so that we do not do it alone, but we

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work within the UN context as a coalition of countries dedicated to the notion of peace building.

That is very much the challenge which now faces us. That is the second track we must begin to follow. As we have begun to almost see a certain resolution of the humanitarian crisis, we must now make sure that a new crisis does not occur. Through the kinds of initiatives of peace building that I talked about, I think we can begin to help resolve those issues.

I know it has been the question and concern which was clearly uppermost on the minds of members in terms of the briefing we held this morning. That is why I want to underline and emphasize the importance of being able to respond to these kinds of international difficulties not in a singular way, not in an inflexible way, not in a single dimension, but to provide a subtle, flexible broad based response in which we can bring to bear the best resources of this country to help solve the conflict.

In conclusion, I again ask members of the House for their support in this initiative. It is not a support which is open ended. We will come back to Parliament on a regular basis through the committee system to ensure that it is constantly being referenced and constantly asking for a response. We have to work together.

I believe this is in the vital interests of Canadians. Many out there are asking why we are involved in Rwanda which is so far away, why we are spending resources in a far off place. Every Canadian has a vital interest. If we do not solve the problems, if we do not help to make that kind of contribution, it will be on our doorstep in a matter of time.

It is the underside of globalization. If we can gain from the benefits of a global system in terms of trade, investment, productivity and growth, we must also bear the responsibility of ensuring the global system is stable, orderly, safe and secure. That has been a long tradition of this country. It is in the tradition that will allow us to continue not only to provide security for other people but our own security as well, by making sure that the world is secure.

I thank members of Parliament for their courtesy and indulgence. I look forward to the ensuing debate and to their continued support as Canada engages in a mission where we are showing leadership in the world in representing the best values and interests of the Canadian people.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is very meaningful for me to speak today in this debate concerning a dramatic situation that is unfolding in the world. I will begin by making it clear that we are faced with a very difficult humanitarian situation on the international level.

• (1225)

This current situation affects me personally, for there is a nongovernmental organization in my riding, the Institut de développement Nord-Sud, which ran a fairly extensive program in Rwanda for several years. Hutus, Tutsis, people from Rwanda and the region have come to my riding, and people from my riding have gone over there, all of this on the interpersonal level.

In approaching a problem like this, I believe we must keep in mind that, when all is said and done, we are dealing with human beings, people, men and women, who have been experiencing very difficult situations for some years, and continue to do so. What is more, these situations are constantly changing.

We are faced with a complex and alarming human situation. I think that it is worthwhile to point out, and very realistic as well, that it was high time that someone took the initiative on this. Canada, it must be noted, has been involved in the decision-making process in recent weeks to ensure that there is the will for international action to be carried out.

We are faced with a situation that is evolving with blinding speed. This morning we had an information session on the situation in Zaire, and the people briefing us were receiving hourly, half-hourly updates on the changing situation. It is important that, in approaching this matter, the Canadian government and the international community keep in mind that the objectives are sacred, but the means to attain them may change.

Last week, military intervention was really the main mission, and it will remain essential in the future, but, as the Minister said, there is more and more international action in quite distinct areas. There is a case for military action in one area and humanitarian action next door, while it is also necessary to project future developments.

I think all these actions must be integrated. Experience is an excellent teacher and today's experience is particularly significant in that we have a living laboratory. We have a situation where human lives are at stake, so we must be prepared to accept that solutions that seemed relevant last week may have to be changed and adjusted as events unfold.

In the end, in one or two or three or five years, we should be able to reach a point where we can say: "This part of the world, after experiencing major upheavals, has been pacified. Its people are living in satisfactory conditions, and they are happy in the place where they live. They manage to deal with their problems and are taking a new, more positive approach."

Unfortunately, today the answer is not necessarily obvious. The situation is extremely complex. Zaire is a country surrounded by 11 other African countries, with populations whose backgrounds vary widely and where the European presence has had an enormous impact. Even today, on the map of Africa, borders often are where

they are as result of European intervention. All this means that we have a situation where a country's borders do not necessarily coincide with tribal borders.

So we have to consider all these factors. I would like to take this opportunity to mention a major contribution being made by Tanzania, a neighbouring country that has provided a buffer solution, as it were, for at least part of the refugees. I think this is an approach that could be a useful precedent. Other African countries would do well to follow this example so that, in the medium term, solutions will be increasingly African solutions, initiated by and for Africans.

Today, in 72 hours, we have gone from a situation where we had more than one million refugees outside Rwanda to a situation where there are 400,000 or perhaps 500,000. It is hard to estimate the exact figures, but in the past 72 hours there has been a major population movement that has completely changed the situation.

• (1230)

Between 400,000 and 500,000 people have become a new and important challenge for the Government of Rwanda and the current situation. It will be necessary to absorb these people who left the country one or two years ago when the country went through a very difficult time. Now they must be reintegrated. Can this be done without strong international assistance, and I am thinking of shelter facilities and food aid corridors? And there are also the non-governmental organizations that are helping to feed and resettle these people. We will have to consider very carefully where the efforts the Government of Canada and of all the other countries that are part of the current international action should be focused.

We must realize that although the situation has changed so dramatically, the answer is certainly not to stop everything tomorrow morning. Just because a lot of Rwandans are going back to Rwanda does not mean that the problem is solved. And above all, international public opinion must not be allowed to focus its attention on other problems while forgetting to deal with the very real problem that exists in this country.

The difficult situation remains and it is not going to be resolved by the Rwandans' return home. It will be resolved once there is, within the African communities concerned, a balance, a way for the population to live in a democratic context and according to the rules that govern peoples who live together and are concerned about each other's growth and development.

The people are not being judged; the issue is simply to ensure that long term solutions are put in place.

Here is an example of some of the information that must be taken into consideration. We know that, at the moment, there may be enough food to feed some 1.5 million people for about 50 days. Therefore, in order to ensure that supplies reach the refugees in

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time, without crises or panic arising from logistics problems, we must ensure there is an infrastructure. I think the action the government has undertaken that has mobilized the international community must continue and will bring significant results in short order.

I stress the aspect of continuing the action, because of all the reactions we see today in the news. People are saying: "We do not know anymore whether the troops are really needed". The Americans, for example, may have doubts.

The movement of the refugees elicits a different response to the problem among the Africans involved. However, the problem remains. We have to look to the means and the types of action, but we must never give up on the problem itself.

So, aid is still needed. It is hard to assess the impact of the multinational force. Over time, however, a link may be established between the point at which the international community decided to act and the subsequent population movements.

This result alone is worth the effort of showing that action had to be taken and that it must continue to be accorded the importance it deserves.

In addition to acting in the short term, we must take the right kind of action. There is a clear lesson for the international community here. The many warning signals that preceded the current crisis went unheeded. It was the resumption of an unfinished war, which led to the massacre of more than one million Rwandans in 1994.

• (1235)

This situation, which has deteriorated over the years, should have been anticipated. Solutions had been suggested. The situation must be dealt with in the short term. For the long term, the French government has suggested that an international conference be held on the whole African great lakes issue, on this whole region of Africa. This suggestion has been on the table for some time now, and it was submitted to the Canadian foreign affairs minister by his French counterpart. I think that beyond the logistics of the current crisis, the international community should go one step further and recognize that the problem is indeed serious and deep-rooted, and that there should be an international conference on the subject.

We could ask ourselves the following question: Would this not be the appropriate way to look for a permanent solution to the problems that were encountered? All players would have to sit around a table and develop comprehensive, long-term solutions to ensure this kind of crisis will never happen again.

Action is said to be required. Why should it always be military action? Non-governmental organizations involved in providing humanitarian relief in the field feel that their work remains

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essential, that it is still important. I think we should trust their experience.

Humanitarian organizations and the military should continue to co-operate in creating corridors. If all the refugees that fled their country return to Rwanda, there will be a significant increase in the number of Rwandans who were no longer part of the country's economy and now need to be integrated. This will involve combining civilian and military protection to deal with very real food supply problems. To achieve this goal, military supervision will still be required to ensure that all operations are conducted in relative safety.

We are confronted to a complex situation where action is continuously needed. But we must ask ourselves what kind of action is required. In itself, the refugees' return is good news. It was one of the two objectives assigned to the international force. The announcement of an international mission helped trigger off the Rwandans' return. The decision made by Rwandese people to return home poses a major challenge for the international community.

These people are experiencing very special conditions. For example, we know that trucks were put at their disposal to bring them back home. However, these people are animated by some kind of survival instinct and they want to walk back to their communities together, collectively. Some negative thoughts may be associated with the trucks. These people experienced genocide. These are human beings in motion who, collectively, decided to find a solution: to return to their villages and to try to rebuild the relationship that existed between them in each of the villages.

We must help them do it by being present and by ensuring that this process takes place in an appropriate framework. We must also ensure that these people are properly looked after when they come back. We were told this morning that, when a family arrives in the village that it left two years earlier, they find their house occupied by someone else. There is a whole way of life to re-establish and redefine. This implies that some form of international assistance is provided. Otherwise, chaos could resurface, and we would not be able to resolve the new crisis.

We must not bury our heads in the sand. We must not forget that the civil war has left open wounds. This is a country trying to get back on its feet. This is a developing country facing a major challenge. No one could have predicted, 72 hours ago, that some 400,000 or 500,000 people would head back home.

• (1240)

Try to imagine, in Quebec or in Canada, a sudden movement of 500,000 people within a 72-hour period. Think of the impact it could have on an economically developed country such as ours.

Now imagine the same situation in a country ravaged by a civil war. This shows how international assistance is still needed.

We may ponder whether, for example, it is still as vital to ensure the disarmament of the troops involved, and how this can be concretely achieved. When refugees were concentrated in camps, the logistics was easier to deal with. Now that refugees are returning home all over the country, will it be possible to use the same approach? Questions remain.

Another big question mark is the six months initially anticipated. We have seen the situation, notably in Bosnia, where a mission was supposed to last a few months and ended up going on for a year and a half. Are we headed for the same sort of situation again? Could the movement of refugees not reduce the length of the mission? These are concerns that we will have to address.

Earlier, the minister was telling us that there will be follow-up. He said that the situation will be referenced through the committee system and in the House of Commons. The official opposition will be watching closely to see, among other things, that our troops are treated properly. Lessons must be learned from the past.

There was a recommendation to change the policy so that soldiers spend at least 12 months in Canada between international missions of this type. Will this policy apply in the present situation? This is one of the factors underlying the malaise found among troops on their return. When this interval is too short and there is inadequate acclimatization and preparation, it shows up in increased suicide rates, and personal and family problems. This is another important concern.

Other questions must also be asked. In light of the unexpected return of over half a million refugees to Rwanda—and the number is increasing daily, if not hourly—will it be possible to meet the goal of ensuring satisfactory humanitarian services in the future?

Another question is whether the Prime Minister intends to require the agreement of all parties present before going ahead, or does he plan to impose the multinational force? This is a good question.

As of this morning, no confirmation has yet been received that the governments of Rwanda and Zaire are prepared to formally agree to the arrival of this force in their territory. Rwanda is wondering whether there is still a need for this international force in view of the changed situation.

Canada is assuming command of this force, an incredible challenge for the armed forces. From the standpoint of political analysis, the challenge will be a major one. Lieutenant-General Baril, the commanding general, and all those assisting him must have access to an accurate analysis of what is going on, be able to react rapidly and have significant support from the Government of Canada. The support of the entire diplomatic machinery will also

be essential, because there is no denying that there is also the risk of friction in an international force involving 15 or 16 countries.

The support of the entire Canadian government, including the diplomatic network, will be required in order to ensure that the action taken is appropriate and responsible, and that it takes account of all the players in this situation.

• (1245)

The armed forces are facing a major challenge as a result of the Canadian government's decision to lead this mission. Canada is already doing its share to a significant extent by sending soldiers abroad on international missions. Consider Bosnia, for instance, where we have about 2,000 soldiers on the ground. Will we be able to continue our participation in missions abroad, and do so satisfactorily, while leading the operation in the African great lakes region?

There is a major point we must consider. Even when we manage to bring in humanitarian aid and take care of the survivors, there is no strategy for preventing a recurrence of the conflict if no long term political solution is found. And this is where the concept of an international conference could be useful.

Today, the initiatives taken by Canada are important to deal with the crisis on a short term basis, but similar initiatives will be necessary to provide a long term solution. Canada must look at the broader picture to find long term solutions.

A concern was raised by families of soldiers who are part of these missions, and past experience can teach us a useful lesson. It is important to know exactly what instructions are given to soldiers who may encounter resistance in the field. What are the rules of engagement? Do those rules exist? Would it be possible to table them so we will know exactly how much leeway the army has?

In addition to our short term strategy, we must have a long term strategy as well. The proposal for an international conference on the great lakes region sounds like an excellent idea. Perhaps we could also learn from our experience in Bosnia with humanitarian aid and the rebuilding of civilian institutions. If the military mission takes less time than expected, perhaps we could consider setting aside certain amounts for rebuilding civilian institutions and include this as part of Canadian and international aid. We think this is an important component of a long term solution.

The governments concerned must have solid roots. They must have the requisite legitimacy and the right tools to build the country. I think the Government of Canada would do well to consider this.

In concluding, in this debate the opposition believes it is important for the Canadian government to continue to take certain

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initiatives, to do so after reflecting on the situation and to continue to take the lead. We may make minor mistakes, but we must ensure that Canada and the international community come out of this operation with their reputation enhanced and that solutions will be found to ensure that Rwanda has public institutions that work in the years to come, and that Rwandans will see that international aid provided on Canada's initiative has helped to restore the quality of their lives. The next few days will be crucial in this respect.

We therefore urge the government to show good judgment and to seek the support of the opposition parties, so that our position can help the government make the best possible decisions, because in this particular case, we are still talking about protecting hundreds of thousands of human lives.

• (1250)

[English]

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to talk about an issue that is of such great concern to all Canadians. I am sure I speak for my colleagues and most Canadians who are horrified by the humanitarian issues that we see on television on a daily basis. The humanitarian tragedy in Rwanda touches all of us.

I cannot help thinking back to my visit to Rwanda. My wife and I spent a month there. We trekked through the very area we are now seeing pictures of. We stood beside Lac Kivu and took pictures of the sunset. We were told that Egyptian folklore said that if you saw a sunset over Lac Kivu you would live 10 years longer. In my office I have a large picture of the sun setting on Lac Kivu.

I cannot help thinking of the people and the villages and the fertile land which represents Rwanda. Rwanda is truly the Switzerland of Africa. The valleys are full of tea. We were able to see the fantastic growth on the volcanic soil. That probably makes this issue even harder, to know the potential of that place and to see what those people have done to themselves.

I cannot help thinking of my days as a university student reading "Heart of Darkness" by Joseph Conrad and being impressed by the book and the way it presented the issue.

We are talking today about what we should do for Rwanda, for Zaire and for the problems which are occurring in the area. To address the issue I want to look back at the record of peacekeeping and of the kinds of issues which we face today. Of course it all comes down to accountability, to making promises and to delivering on those promises.

Canada's role in peacekeeping goes back as far as the Suez Canal. That was a different age. It was a different time. The world was much simpler than the world in which we live today.

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We could talk about Cyprus and the six months that we were going to be there. Of course we know what that turned into.

We could talk about Bosnia. In 1991 we committed to help there. The Liberals were extremely concerned by the Progressive Conservative decision to go to Bosnia without adequate information, without adequate consultation and certainly without the will of Parliament.

I can remember this time last year standing in the foyer of the Parliament Buildings with Susan Harada, who was interviewing the then defence minister. He said that the situation in Bosnia was definitely under control and under the new NATO mission our troops would definitely not be there this time next year. He said we would not be there after December of 1996 and "that is a promise and I stand by it".

We now know that IFOR II is being proposed. The Americans are committed for another 18 months. Canada is probably going to commit for another however many months.

We can talk about Somalia. It was a U.S. mission. We all saw the photos of those dead marines being hauled through the streets. We know how quickly that mission disintegrated and how we returned with our tail between our legs.

We could talk about the tragedy that has already occurred in Rwanda and the under-equipped and under-sized group of peacekeepers who were there, again led by Canada. The genocide continued. There was no hope for the peacekeepers. Of course there was no order and again we withdrew.

We have known about this issue for a long time. Ten years ago when I was there the NGOs were talking about it. It did not happen last weekend, as the Prime Minister would like us to believe. The issue has been there for a long time. It was there during the colonization of this area when the Europeans treated these people so badly.

• (1255)

Then of course there is Haiti. Haiti has not moved a long way. There is no education system. Unemployment stands at 85 per cent. The quality of life has not really improved. This time last year this very foreign affairs minister in the Charles Lynch Room downstairs said that all would be in order by December 1996. Canada would not have to renew its commitment or its mission because all would be in order.

When I had the privilege of being in Haiti in June and really seeing matters, it was obvious that promise would never be kept. Haiti needs a 20-year plan to really get it up and functioning.

Now it is Zaire and we have a promise of four to six months. Is that an honest promise? Is that the reality that we are facing in this House today or is it more like so many examples we have had in the past?

Then I would throw in the U.S. factor. The overriding concern of the world seems to be that the U.S. is the only remaining superpower and that we must do what the U.S. tells us. Of course, during the election campaign it was very easy for Mr. Clinton to say: "We will be out of Haiti by end of February 1996" and it was. But we went in for the Americans. It was easy for him to say in Bosnia: "We will only be there until 1996", but again the credibility of the whole political system is at question when the week after the election the Americans have now committed for 18 months more in Bosnia. I question how much longer it will be until they are back in Haiti.

We can talk about Iraq and the bombings that went on there which we just in a matter of minutes agreed to. We can talk about Somalia and what the inquiry is showing, how U.S. diplomats, U.S. intelligence agents, U.S. military personnel told our people what to do.

The second in command in Zaire is going to be an American. Canada has a great reputation around the world. It is a reputation not tarnished by a colonial past, by aggressiveness to anyone. We have a reputation that we care about people. How long can we keep being the Joe boy for the U.S. and retain that neutral position that we so value as Canadians? All of us in this Parliament should ask that question.

What is the pattern that develops? The pattern is that problems are identified by NGOs, by foreign affairs, by CNN. Occasionally they are identified by the UN. Then a propaganda campaign is started, never mentioning the real issues, never really talking about all of the problems. Our new defence minister has a big problem in that morale has slipped. He has a problem that the Somalia inquiry has gone on much too long. He has a problem that his Prime Minister is perceived in international affairs to simply be interested in trade and that, after all, has not been the Liberal way.

The Liberals believe they have to get involved in something to raise the profile of the Prime Minister, the party and certainly the defence minister. Lo and behold an issue has come along. However, that issue was there two years ago. It was there 10 years ago but now it has become an urgent crisis.

The next step is to get the UN to rubber stamp it. Of course with the U.S. superpower status that is not a problem.

Then we have to think back to what the Liberals said about Mr. Mulroney being in the pocket of the Americans. With regard to Mr. Mulroney's being there, where is Mr. Chrétien?

• (1300)

Then we have to ask about the taxpayers and the cost of these issues. It appears that we can never quite put our finger on what it is going to cost. In fact, we can cover the costs up in normal operation. In all the cases I have pointed out the protagonists

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simply wait until we tire of the mission and then they carry on from where they were before.

What are the questions I believe Canadians and all members of this House deserve answers to? The mission is changing, the mandate is changing on an hourly basis. Is there still a need for the mission? Can NGOs carry out this mission? Do we need soldiers on the ground? We have to ask this question and it has to be displayed to us that it is necessary.

We have to ask about the military capabilities, and my colleague will be talking about that in detail. I was at a briefing where I was told we could handle two missions but not three. The Canadian public needs to know which one we are getting out of. Are we going to stay in Bosnia where we are not part of decision making, where we have been there longer than anybody else, more committed than anybody else but have little say in what is going to happen? Can that be handed off to someone else?

With respect to Haiti, it is in our hemisphere and we can hardly give that one up as we took a lead role. How can we give Zaire up? Our Prime Minister has said we are the world leaders, we want to raise our profile and this is how we are going to do it.

We need to ask questions about what is happening and we need to get Canadians and this House to focus on what is the mandate of our military? For 20 years we have been cutting the military. It has been the scapegoat for lowering budgets. When are we going to say not only do we have the very best troops but we want to have the best equipment, the best training and we want to have the very best ability to do the jobs that we are going to be called on to do. What about the families of the military? These are all questions I have not heard addressed by anybody in this House.

Do the local governments want us? That is a pretty big question. The prime minister of Rwanda has questions. Certainly Mr. Mobutu who has been propped up in Zaire for so many years wants to know more details about bringing in foreign troops. Are they going to be on his side or not?

We need to find out what the exact mandate is. You do not go into something without knowing the details of the mandate and the risks you run. It is great if everything goes just fine and you come out being the very best, but what if it does not go fine? There are many potential dangers. It is a dangerous mission we are asking our men and women to go on and so we have to clarify that mandate. We have to know what it is like. that is jungle, after all, and I can testify to that on a very personal basis.

We have to clarify the mandate. We have to know what the rules of engagement are. We have to know what happens if rebels start shooting at our troops. We have to know what happens if hostages are taken. We have to know the answers. Canadians have a right to

know the answers to those questions before we send these people off.

Of course I cannot help but mention the cost. We need to know what the estimates are. After all, we have a \$50 billion interest payment every year that is crippling us and putting us behind the rest of the world. We need to know where this money is coming from and how much it is before we leave.

We need to know an exit strategy. I have given the examples of all the times we have heard in this place "we are there for six months and I guarantee we will be out of there in six months".

• (1305)

I heard that out in the foyer, I heard that down in the news gallery. I have heard that over and over and we will hear it again. Four to six months, what kind of a guarantee? How are we going to measure how well we have done and how we are going to get out of this mission? We need to know that.

We need to know how we get out of Haiti, out of Somalia, out of Bosnia. We need to know we are training somebody to take our place, and who better than the African forces themselves?

We cannot be the Canadian foreign legion. We cannot go everywhere. We do have to pick and choose. We have to look at our role in the international community. We have to make this Parliament meaningful. This Parliament must be part of this. I could just as easily say what the Minister of Foreign Affairs said when he was in opposition, that Parliament has to be meaningful, Parliament must have a say when the lives of our men and women are at stake.

What should we be doing? We should let Parliament have a say. We should make it a meaningful process. We should have briefings from all the people involved, from the military, from the NGO community, from foreign affairs, from all the people who know what is happening there, from those who have been there, who have spent years there. There are a lot of them. They could let this House know before our troops are sent. We should have an opportunity to question them, everybody on an equal basis. This should not be a partisan issue.

We should have representative speakers of each party speak on the issues. Those people could express the views that would have been formulated with information obtained through questioning. Everybody would have an opportunity to do that.

There should be a free vote in the House to make the decision on this. It does not have to be a last minute thing like it always is. None of these issues shows up overnight.

We need to train people to take care of themselves. We need to be involved in the long term training of African countries to take care of their many issues. These problems for the most part were caused by colonization, by the European and American influence

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in so many of these countries. We need a workable plan. Maybe it should be geographic.

Perhaps we need a Euro force. There is one in the planning stages as part of the EU. It will handle European problems. We need an Afro force to handle African problems. We need an Americas force, an OAS force, to handle the Americas. Of course Asia should be able to take some responsibility for itself. The point is we will then create a solution, a hope for the future, a vision of how this world can maintain peace.

We do care about the people. We want to help the people with all these humanitarian problems, but we cannot give a blank cheque. We must have these questions answered. Canadians want answers, we want answers, and I am sure I speak for many parliamentarians on all sides of this House.

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be participating in this important debate. I want to thank my hon. colleagues for their participation to this point.

As members of the House are well aware, the situation in the great lakes region of Africa remains extremely fluid. Indeed it continues to evolve as we speak. We face a major humanitarian crisis in eastern Zaire and in Rwanda.

Last week approximately one and a half million refugees were either huddling in makeshift camps or fleeing from conflict. The plight of these men, women and children is absolutely desperate.

• (1310)

The efforts of international humanitarian agencies to reach those in need were being impeded by warring factions. Hundreds of thousands of lives are in jeopardy. Canada was not prepared to stand by and watch another African tragedy unfold. We decided to respond.

Canada took the lead in organizing a multinational approach to ensure the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance in the region. I am sure that all members of the House would agree with me that the Prime Minister's initiative over the last 10 days has succeeded beyond our wildest dreams because already the situation has changed dramatically and for the better.

Hundreds of thousands of refugees have taken to the roads to return to their communes in Rwanda. This exodus which all of us are witnessing will go a long way toward resolving the humanitarian crisis in eastern Zaire.

Surely we can all agree that it is much too early to say that the crisis is over. For example, we believe there are still approximately 500,000 refugees in Zaire. There are people still in need. Those who are the healthiest are the ones who were able to return to

Rwanda first. Yet it is impossible at this moment for anyone to determine the true extent of the crisis.

So, faced with this uncertainty we continue to take the preliminary steps with our coalition partners that are necessary to mount a relief effort. We continue to examine every option as the situation in the region evolves. To that end Canadian forces continue to prepare for possible deployment. Over the coming days as we assess the situation we want to make sure that they are capable of acting if that is required.

[*Translation*]

That Canada should take a lead in this endeavour should come as no surprise. Canada has a long and proud tradition of promoting international stability and coming to the aid of those in need.

The Canadian Forces have the capability to make a real difference. Canada has one of the most professional and respected military organizations in the world. Our armed forces have what it takes to lead a multinational relief effort.

We have participated in almost every peacekeeping mission undertaken over the last 50 years, from traditional peacekeeping and observer missions to the more complex operations of the post-Cold War era, including humanitarian relief operations.

Of course, we have extensive military experience in Central Africa itself. From the Congo operation of the early 1960s to more recent operations in Somalia and Rwanda, we know the challenges: inhospitable terrain, a harsh climate, armed and hostile rebel groups.

We have already deployed an assessment team to the great lakes region. This team will help assist ongoing multinational planning. If necessary, we are prepared to contribute approximately 1,500 military personnel to a humanitarian relief force.

This contribution could include the core of a task force headquarters responsible for command, control and communications for a multinational force. We could also provide the core of the air component headquarters, which would help direct air operations for such a task force, as well as a DART disaster assistance response team for humanitarian assistance to refugees, including troops for protection. This team would include a field hospital and a transportation element, Hercules transport aircraft, and associated personnel to assist in the delivery of humanitarian aid, and a national support element.

All of these elements could deploy quickly to staging bases in the region. DART is a specialized military unit of highly trained professionals. It includes medical personnel, engineers, a transport and communications unit, and an infantry platoon for security.

DART can provide medical resources to treat up to 500 patients a day, as well as electrical power and drinking water for up to 10,000

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people per day. It can also build temporary shelters and provide communications and logistics support.

Some of the lead elements of DART are already in eastern Zaire.

• (1315)

By the end of today, we will have almost 250 personnel in theatre, with 4 Hercules and 1 Airbus aircraft, as well as some DART equipment and vehicles. The balance of the DART equipment and personnel is assembled in Trenton and ready to go.

Other augmentation personnel have been identified from across the Canadian Forces. In short, the Canadian Forces are poised to do what needs to be done. But any decision to participate in a humanitarian relief effort in eastern Zaire will be based on specific guidelines.

To begin with, all regional governments must acquiesce to the presence of a multinational force.

[*English*]

In addition to the need to have the agreement of the governments in that region before we move, we also of course need a clear and achievable mandate. The security council mandate calls for the establishment for humanitarian purposes of a temporary multinational force to facilitate the immediate return of humanitarian organizations and the effective delivery by civilian relief organizations of humanitarian aid. It also calls for a force that will facilitate the voluntary orderly repatriation of refugees by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the voluntary return of displaced persons.

Additionally, any mission must be of limited duration. The UN Security Council resolution envisages a mission of four months, but recent events may well indicate that this may be longer than is necessary.

The multinational force called for by the security council resolution would operate under chapter VII of the UN charter with robust rules of engagement. These rules of engagement would allow our troops for example to use deadly force to protect themselves, relief personnel, and in certain situations, refugees.

We must have a clear and effective command and control structure in place. Lieutenant-General Maurice Baril, commander, land force command, will lead the force. General Baril is a perfect fit for such a command. He was a battalion commander in Cyprus and was special military adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General from 1992 to 1995.

General Baril is now en route to the region and he will arrive there today. Following discussions with Ambassador Chrétien, representatives from various NGOs and local authorities, General Baril will provide the Government of Canada with his strategic assessment of the military situation. I am pleased to advise that there will be a meeting in Stuttgart, Germany on Thursday at which

General Baril and representatives of the contributing nations will make further decisions as to what type of force we should have in place and how the humanitarian relief operation should be conducted.

I have been telling the House what this multinational relief force might do. Let me take a moment to tell the House what it will not do. It will not conduct forced entry operations. It will not be responsible for overall repatriation or integration of refugees. It will not intervene in factional or local conflicts. It will not deal with territorial disputes. It will not separate the intimidators from the refugees, nor will it disarm the intimidators. It will not secure the perimeter of refugee camps. It will not provide police functions within the camps.

I am sure that all members in this House will agree that the parties in the region must find their own solutions to the political and social problems they face.

There is no doubt that over the years we have built a reputation as a nation for being there when it counts. We believe it is critical that we not only contribute but lead a force that would help stabilize central Africa and save hundreds of thousands of lives.

I want to thank the American government and the military leaders of the United States for their co-operation. Although we have the lead and the command of this operation, we obviously do not have all of the resources to be able to take on the logistics that are required if we were to continue down the path that we have chosen.

I want to repeat, because I have heard it said over and over again, that we are monitoring the situation hour to hour, if not minute to minute. We understand the changes that have already taken place. Let me say that no one is enthusiastic about having to commit Canadian men and women to a situation that is extremely volatile and very complex. We are doing what we must do. We have moved to this position as a result of a great deal of consensus in the international community.

• (1320)

I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the Canadian people, that I know that as I have complete confidence in the men and women of the Canadian forces, I have no doubt Canadians from coast to coast share that confidence. The skill of the Canadian forces, their commitment, their experience, their leadership qualities are second to none. The Canadian forces once again are ready to do the job and I have every confidence they will do it well.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this debate on the peacekeeping missions Canada has been involved in for many years, as the minister of defence has

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just mentioned. For some 50 years now, Canada has taken part in almost every peacekeeping mission it has been asked to join.

As it has always done, the Bloc Québécois supports the government's humanitarian aid initiative. We recognize the leadership shown by the current government in inviting the international community to help bring an end to the slaughter and resolve the current humanitarian problem at the border between Rwanda and Zaire.

Debates have taken place in this House on earlier peacekeeping missions. Certain discrepancies led to questions and requests for clarification from the Bloc Québécois, the official opposition. Each time there was a mission—be it in Bosnia or Haiti—we expected Canada would go to the aid of countries facing problems, be they wars, famine or disease. When the government decided to send peacekeepers, we expected the role, mandate and length of the missions would be clearly indicated.

The situation in Zaire is changing quickly. A couple of weeks ago, more than half a million people fled to Zaire and now they are returning to Rwanda. Obviously the planning and preparation of the international mission under Canada's leadership will have to change. Zaire has accepted and confirmed the presence of a Canadian led multinational force, but Rwanda has not. If all the refugees head to Rwanda, negotiations will be necessary.

There has been significant involvement by armed rebels in the military conflict in Rwanda between the Tutsis and the Hutus, which has been spilling over into Zaire and Uganda. As the minister of defence has said, we want to send lightly armed peacekeepers, who will intervene not as a UN force, but as a multinational force approved by the UN with a more or less defined mission.

Western countries like Canada, the United States and France should intervene in the event of humanitarian problems, such as the one in the great lakes region of Africa.

• (1325)

I cannot help but wonder, as some of my hon. colleagues probably wonder, how Canada will be able to cope with the various military forces over there, when the role of our peacekeepers remains to be defined.

We will recall that, several months ago, in Bosnia, Canadian troops were taken hostage by Serbs. This incident held the international community in suspense for several days. It is obvious that the peacekeepers and UNPROFOR as a whole had neither the mandate nor the capacity to protect themselves under such circumstances.

What will happen in Zaire and Rwanda with the rebels and armed militia? On what basis have the Canadian government,

National Defence, Foreign Affairs planned how our military are to behave in various situations.

Without bringing back too many bad memories, I think we must bear in mind that there were incidents involving peacekeepers in Rwanda. Belgian troops under the command of a Canadian general were murdered in Rwanda. All too often, in peacekeeping missions such as those in Bosnia, Haiti and now Zaire, the Canadian government sends out Canadian troops with a humanitarian mission. Everyone agrees and realizes that Canada must act along those lines.

In missions as important as these, where the political and military stakes are critically high, it is nevertheless fair enough, in my opinion, to say that preparation is critical. Every soldier and officer participating in such missions must know exactly what is expected of him or her, and they must also be able to protect themselves.

In recent years, the practice has very often been to ignore to some extent the families left behind by deployed troops. The troops themselves know very little about the nature of the mission as they fly out of Canada to trouble spots or other areas where they are supposed to make a significant contribution. They are unsure of how long they will be gone, and have little information regarding the role they are expected to play in support of the local population and how they should behave.

The defence and foreign affairs departments deserve to be criticized for the lack of information they provide. Because of the reputation and generosity of Canadians, they take it upon themselves to help communities clearly experiencing major problems. When it comes to missions of this type, the key players are the troops and the officers who take part in it, those who will be in the theatre of operations. Before they leave, military people often tell their families, their loved ones, and sometimes the media, that their mission is vague, that their role is not well defined. They do not know which weapons they can use if they are surrounded by militia troops or rebels out to capture them. They do not know if they are allowed to defend themselves or if they must once again put up with being humiliated? This is one of the problems experienced by Canadian troops who took part in recent peacekeeping missions.

It shows that the government is once again improvising somewhat. The families of these troops feel it makes no sense to send a son, a husband, a father, a wife, or a sister to such theatres of operations, without knowing what is expected of them.

• (1330)

There have been instances, but hopefully this will no longer be the case, where Canadian troops may have lost their lives because the instructions given to them were not clear. I am thinking of the death of Corporal Gunther and others who took part in such missions as proud members of our armed forces, proud Quebecers and proud Canadians. These people provided humanitarian assis-

tance, but their mission was not properly planned, which resulted in mixed success and, in some cases, in extending our troops' involvement.

It must also be pointed out that Canada has contributed very large numbers of troops to international conflicts over the last three years. Only recently, in 1993-94, Canadian troops in Bosnia numbered almost 2,000. At that time, although Canada had a very large contingent, it did not even have a decision making role in diplomatic exchanges or peace negotiations. You will recall that Canada was not then a member of the contact group and that it had not taken part in the decisions surrounding negotiations to restore peace to Bosnia. There are now almost 750 soldiers in Haiti; there are still just over 1,000 in Bosnia, and the plan is to send another 1,000 to Zaire.

I have discussed this point with a number of soldiers and even with certain officers. The rotation of assignments to peacekeeping missions is leading to a certain fatigue among the troops. Far be it from me to turn the knife in the wound, but in the present context we are only too aware that the army has had its internal problems that, up to a point, can be linked to this accumulation of peacekeeping missions and to the fact that soldiers have always been sent back into the theatre of operations, very often with insufficient time to catch their psychological and even their physical breath. Some have experienced serious family, psychological and other problems.

Once again, I do not think these soldiers are being allowed sufficient recovery time. Although there are almost 65,000 soldiers in the Canadian army, including all ranks and levels, with rare exceptions that portion of the Canadian army used in peacekeeping missions is generally and almost always limited to the ground forces. As for the navy and the air force, their participation in the various missions is much more restricted.

So it is almost always the same land army personnel who are used to help out various nations in the world, one might say, for in the last ten years Canada has been to just about all of the theaters of international conflict on this planet.

I feel that these individuals have reached a degree of overload, which might even explain the problems experienced by the army—more so than by the navy or the air force, although they too have been involved in these humanitarian operations or these conflicts—which are psychologically and physically stressful and demand virtually superhuman efforts, particularly when soldiers must do the same thing over and over again.

● (1335)

I know soldiers who were in Bosnia for six months, then back to Canada for a little less than a year, then back to Bosnia. They then returned to Canada for a little less than a year before being sent to Haiti. As for the Calgary regiment, they have been to Bosnia twice and now it will be Zaire.

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If, over a period of barely 36 months, soldiers have to spend, in six-month chunks, more than 12 months in a conflict situation away from their loved ones and from the security of their home environments, I imagine that what can happen is a sort of overloading, an inability to bounce back either psychologically or physically.

I point this out because all Canadians, all Quebecers, and I think all parliamentarians here agree that Canada has a duty to take part in this type of mission and, for once, we salute Canadian leadership in the current situation in Zaire.

We must be aware, however, that our human resources within the armed forces, as well as our financial resources, are in what I would call a precarious condition. Despite the good will and compassion of all parliamentarians, of all members here in this House and of the entire public, we must realize that considering its human and financial resources, Canada cannot afford to be the 911 of the planet. Every time a conflict erupts somewhere, Canada is called and everything is taken care of. Canada is always ready to go.

This is not the first time it was mentioned in debate that Canada should have an established and definitive policy. I even remember that, in a speech he gave at the UN in New York, former Minister of Foreign Affairs André Ouellet mentioned that in the not too distant future, the UN, and I think that is where we are now, should have a permanent force, staffed by various countries, that would intervene in certain conflicts in certain locations.

This would make it possible for all countries, including Canada, to plan for the number of soldiers it could make available, while maintaining sufficient rotation so that individuals who take part in these missions are able to have a family life and engage in some psychological and physical recuperation. At the same time, it would also be possible to budget for this kind of mission.

Unfortunately, in spite of all the good intentions and praiseworthy proposals, it became clear in recent budgets that the government was cutting back severely on humanitarian aid, including medical assistance, food and the like, and had increased the military component in various peacekeeping missions, which produces results.

We may occasionally wonder whether these results are truly positive, but the fact remains that this money will occasionally be used preventively, as many representatives of NGOs providing humanitarian assistance have mentioned, instead of always putting out the fires of a conflict that in many cases will rekindle as soon as the peacekeepers leave the theatre of operations.

● (1340)

In concluding, I must say that the government's initiative has been approved and is supported by all members here in this House, but nevertheless, various factors must be considered and there must

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be a certain degree of planning. The government must consider our human resources, meaning our military, who will need certain rest periods, etc. We must establish very strict guidelines on the amount of money we want to invest in these activities instead of budgeting piecemeal and often cutting somewhere else.

Finally, I would like to point out that many people in Quebec and Canada find it hard to understand why the government is deploying humanitarian aid when in a number of provinces, people have trouble keeping body and soul together.

[*English*]

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Charlesbourg for his remarks.

A debate like this is a time when all members of the House of Commons can express our feelings about a very serious situation regardless of our party affiliations, whether we are on the government or the opposition benches.

In reviewing the situation this past week I would like to draw the government's attention to the possibility that the Hutu refugees who are arriving on the Rwandan borders, hundreds of thousands right now, may be part of something that has been instigated by the Hutu militias themselves.

I am afraid of this. Two years ago in 1994 during the genocide in Rwanda, the Hutus fled. When they fled they left their homes and villages empty. In the intervening two years a great number of exiled Tutsis have returned to those villages in Rwanda. There is a situation in Rwanda right now where hundreds of thousands of Hutus are returning to their homeland and there are Tutsis occupying many of those villages.

I suggest this is the classic formula for additional conflict, for additional fighting among the local populations. I noticed that the Minister of National Defence made it very clear that in committing troops to Rwanda and Zaire they are being given the robust rules of engagement. That means they can defend themselves with deadly force or defend aid workers with deadly force. While one regrets that very possibility I still applaud the minister of defence for giving the troops that authorization.

However, we must remember another spectre will present itself to our soldiers over there, or there is a very good chance of it. The Minister of National Defence also made it very clear that Canadian troops were not to intervene in local or factional fighting. And so we in this House, Canadians and possibly the world have to be prepared for the possibility that we will have troops and aid workers on the ground, that we will see surrounding them a resumption of the mindless killing we saw two years ago.

I bring to the attention of the House and to all Canadians that while we do engage in a humanitarian effort which is absolutely

vital, and I am very proud of Canada and my Prime Minister for initiating this, we as Canadians must be prepared to see on television in the days to come some very appalling scenes. We have to understand that we are faced with a very difficult situation, a very difficult matter of choices. I am afraid that we have to steel ourselves as Canadians and citizens of the world for the scenes we are going to see in the days to come.

I would be very interested in the remarks of the member for Charlesbourg on this.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacob: Mr. Speaker, I listened to the comments of my hon. colleague. Certainly no one can have anything against pride. It is easy for the government to decide that Canada will take part in a particular mission.

• (1345)

What I wanted to point out was the number of servicemen in the army. While, as I mentioned, few servicemen in the air force and the navy take part in these activities, there are some 12,000 to 15,000 servicemen in the army involved. Over the past eight or ten years, Canada has regularly been asked to be part of various humanitarian missions, and, as I said, there has often been little planning and even a certain amount of improvisation.

We in Parliament do not give much thought to those who make up these resources. We say we are proud to send them, but we must have some feeling for those who take on the role and those who pay to send them. Everyone is agreed on taking part, but we do have to have a clearer policy, that is all.

[*English*]

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the government, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of National Defence for providing us with this opportunity to speak on this very important issue.

This is the third or fourth debate we have had on such an important issue since the beginning of this Parliament almost three years ago. I also have to mention that this is probably the only Parliament in western civilization which provides an opportunity for its members of Parliament, the backbenchers and the critics from the opposition parties to speak individually on such issues of importance as this one.

Over the past 30 or 40 years we have engaged in peacekeeping in maybe 2,000 locations. Each one has different characteristics, a different perspective and each one calls for a different mission. With respect to this mission the situation is changing every hour. The situation was different last week from the situation we are now in and the situation tomorrow will probably be a different one again. Nobody knows. There is a massive migration of population

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from one country to another. We cannot stop it but we can be there to help them out to achieve that goal.

On April 23, a few months ago, the House passed a motion recognizing the tragedy which fell upon the Armenian people in 1915. At that time we adopted a motion that each year, April 22 to 27 would be a week of remembrance regarding the inhumanity of people toward one another. This is a perfect occasion to use that motion to promote a common understanding among mankind and to make sure that what happened in the past does not repeat itself. We can do our best to prevent that situation and this is one such situation.

The whole western civilization responded positively to the Prime Minister's message to help the people in Rwanda and Zaire to make sure they get back to their communities and villages so that they can start to live in peace and prosperity as they did many many years before.

This morning, foreign affairs, CIDA and national defence provided us with a very important briefing at which members of the opposition party were also present. The Reform and the Bloc Québécois representatives were there. In that briefing they discussed three situations: NGO aid to the people in the central African nation; the military operations that are taking place now to prepare for a continuation of the mission; and our own foreign aid to the region so we can help build the communities so people can live in peace and harmony.

Last week I was in Germany with colleagues from the Bloc Québécois and Reform. I discussed this issue with my Reform Party friend from Red Deer. He agrees basically with everybody else that this mission has to take place. He agrees also that we have to make sure we do our bit to help civilization overcome this difficulty.

What we do not agree upon, and I respect his point view, is that we have to get ready, to prepare ourselves. How long do these people have to wait for Canada, for the United States, for Germany and for France to get ready? If they have to wait for us to get ready, there will be a long wait. I am sure my colleague agrees with me it would be a long and difficult wait. By then probably half the people would be dead and we would not be able to help them.

Remember that in April 1995 we saw bodies floating in the river and the lake. We had to do something then. The mission was not complete. I am sorry it did not come to a satisfactory end.

• (1350)

This is the opportunity for us to do the best we can. I am sure at the end of the day the Reform Party and the Bloc Québécois will agree that this mission must go forward. It may not be perfect but

nothing and nobody is perfect. However, we cannot afford to wait any longer.

Again I thank all members and especially the government for giving us the opportunity to speak on this issue. I hope that at the end of the day we are much wiser when we go forward with this mission to protect innocent human lives so they can build their lives in peace and harmony.

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning my colleague mentioned the briefing we had with the three departments. It was a very interesting briefing.

I believe it was Mr. Buckley from foreign affairs who mentioned that Canada has spent close to \$50 million in help so far in that area of the African continent. Does my colleague think the \$50 million was well spent? Does he think we should increase or decrease this amount? Where should this money go?

Mr. Assadourian: Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to hear during the briefing that after 1994 we saw on TV the Government of Canada responded generously with a \$50 million contribution to the situation there. Of that, \$27 million has already been spent mostly on NGOs and humanitarian institutions like the Red Cross, Canadian or international.

We also spent quite a bit of money to provide them with a legal system so that those who commit genocide and crimes against humanity can be prosecuted. That is important. Those who commit crimes should know there are consequences to it. They cannot have a free lunch if they commit genocide or other crimes. That is a very important point and it is money very well spent. I am happy the government spent that kind of money for this purpose so we can prevent this from happening again in the future.

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member made some reference to the fact that this is an emergency and that it is suddenly urgent that foreign troops be sent into central Africa. There have been massacres of great magnitude in that area since 1959. There was one in 1959, another one in 1972, another one in 1994 and the world essentially yawned and closed its eyes. Suddenly, it becomes urgent.

Why is the current situation of greater importance to the hon. member than the previous massacres?

Mr. Assadourian: Mr. Speaker, this is a very interesting question.

I am sure the hon. member knows that the world ignored many genocides before, including the 1915 genocide of Armenians which I just mentioned. Just because we did not react then or in 1959, 1965 or 1975, two wrongs do not make a right. It is time we took a stand.

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At that time of course the hon. member was not a member of Parliament and could not speak up. I was not a member of Parliament and could not speak up. It is good that both of us are here today so we can react to this situation and make sure that what happened in the past as a wrong does not occur again.

My best message to the hon. member is that two wrongs do not make a right.

• (1355)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give my fullest support to the decision made by the government to alleviate human suffering in the great lakes region of central Africa.

It is right to do all we can to help fight disease, death and cruelty whenever we can. We owe it to ourselves and to our neighbours to recognize that our responsibilities extend beyond Canada's boundaries. As a CBC commentator suggested last week, referring to this issue: "It is a noble deed to transcend our own personal concerns".

Canada has a longstanding commitment to the rest of the world. We have fought tyranny in both world wars. Canada was a founding member of the League of Nations and the United Nations, and since the end of the second world war, we have participated in many international ventures from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to the Francophonie.

We Canadians have such strong immigration, economic, cultural and personal ties with the international community that we instinctively realize that we must know the people out there in order to know ourselves.

[*English*]

Forty years ago almost to the day, a Canadian was in the forefront of another global effort to restore stability to an apparently faraway region. The Suez crisis had erupted and the Middle East was in flames. Foreign affairs minister Lester Pearson, horrified by a conflict that threatened international peace and split even Canada's friends, hurried to New York and immediately set to work with his colleagues from the Department of External Affairs to find the solution.

The answer lay in an innovative application of a relatively new concept, United Nations peacekeeping, an expedient which had been used since the end of the second world war to concoct small observer forces in the Middle East and on the India-Pakistan border.

Mr. Pearson's cool and flexible diplomacy in 1956 led to the establishment against all odds of the United Nations emergency force in the Middle East, a large multinational UN team whose role was to police a ceasefire and interpose itself between the combat-

ants. The idea was a simple but powerful one, to create a breathing space so that there was a real opportunity for peace to be grasped if the parties wanted it sufficiently.

The peacekeepers could not make peace. They had—

The Speaker: I know that the hon. member has just started his speech but I propose at this time to proceed with Statements by Members. I am sure the whips are going to sort everything out before we get too much farther down the road. I leave it in the hands of our very able whips. I am sure they are going to decide your fate quite well.

[*Translation*]

We will now move on to statements by members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

VOLUNTEERS

Mr. Reg Alcock (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour two constituents who through their actions have enriched the lives of many others both in Canada and abroad.

The first is Ms. Julie Huish, who was awarded a Canada Volunteer Award Certificate of Merit. Julie has been a volunteer physiotherapist with the Manitoba Riding for the Disabled Association for the past eight years.

The second is Mr. Tony Wagemaker, who has been recognized by CESO, Canadian Executive Services Overseas, for his volunteer efforts working with the Government of Thailand at its health system research institute. He has brought many delegates from Thailand to study hospitals and the health care system here in Canada as they attempt to model their health care system on our very excellent one.

Congratulations to both of them. They are enriching the lives of many people through their volunteer efforts.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ORDRE DES INFIRMIÈRES ET DES INFIRMIERS DU QUÉBEC

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Ordre des infirmières et des infirmiers du Québec held its annual convention in Montreal on November 4 and 5. Under the theme "Daring to Provide Care in a Uncaring Society", more than 1,200 nurses from across Quebec gathered to discuss the future of their profession.

On behalf of my colleagues of the official opposition, I want to acknowledge the work and dedication of these women and men whose working conditions are becoming increasingly difficult.

While skill and expertise is required from these health professionals to rapidly adjust to the move toward ambulatory care, we recognize that they play a unique role in maintaining values that our society cherishes as regards the health and well-being of Quebecers.

* * *

• (1400)

[English]

ETHICS

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, exciting news—exciting news. We have found the 10 most important ethical guidelines for the Liberal government.

No. 10. When in doubt call Paul Desmarais.

No. 9. Little white fibs do not count.

No. 8. Whatever you do, do not get caught.

No. 7. You can fool some of the people some of the time, and all of the people some of the time. And remember, you should certainly try to fool all of the people all of the time.

No. 6. Remember, there is a sucker born every minute.

No. 5. For ethical advice after office hours call JoJo.

No. 4. If JoJo does not answer, call the Prime Minister's imaginary friend.

No. 3. When asked to produce or follow an actual set of guidelines, look either stunned or puzzled or act offended and indignant.

No. 2. Government credit cards, don't leave home without them.

The most important ethical guideline of the entire Liberal Government, No. 1. Remember, when dealing with Liberal contributors or family members, there are no rules.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Beauce, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the new employment insurance legislation requires 26 weeks of insurable employment in the case of workers who did not claim benefits in the past two years. This is unfair.

The construction industry, among others, has experienced particularly difficult years, and workers who were not able to qualify last year because they had not worked long enough will be even less able to do so this year, since they will be deemed to have been out

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of the workforce for two years. In other words, they will need 26 weeks of insurable employment in the past year.

Their only option is to go on welfare. The situation is urgent. A solution must be found to avoid penalizing even more an industry which, in Quebec, has had more than its share of problems in recent years.

* * *

[English]

MARJORIE LAVALLEE

Mr. Bernie Collins (Souris—Moose Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mrs. Marjorie Lavallee, my constituent, an astounding volunteer who recently travelled to Bolivia on an assignment with the Canadian Executive Services Organization.

CESO volunteer advisers are professionally skilled men and women, usually retired, who willingly share their years of experience with needy businesses and organizations in developing nations.

Mrs. Lavallee's job was to assess the Bolivian government's indigenous peoples education review program. She used her own experience as an active participant in reforming Canada's aboriginal educational system.

I am proud to have a constituent who takes an active part in Canada's efforts to stimulate development in disadvantaged economies.

* * *

JUSTICE

Ms. Judy Bethel (Edmonton East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is great value to community action at a national level. In Edmonton East we developed an effective partnership between residents, students, agencies, police and yes, even our justice minister. By working together we have made great gains in creating safer streets and safer neighbourhoods.

There is cause for celebration, taking and sharing credit. Our powerful partnership has eliminated the legal use of a deadly weapon intended for use by violent, aggressive youth against others. This weapon, marketed as a comb, is 8 1/2 inches long and splits open in the middle. Once opened, the handle has an attached 4-inch steel knife blade.

Thanks to Partners for Youth, for working together, to staff and students at Eastglen High School, to Constables Rick Cooper and Aaron Nichols for identifying the weapon and bringing it to our attention. And of course, to the Minister of Justice for his efforts in making changes to section 84 of the Criminal Code.

Because this dangerous weapon is now out of the hands of youth, we are preventing crime and violence.

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WIFE ASSAULT PREVENTION MONTH

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the last 12 months in Ontario alone 18 women have been killed by their partners. Along with those women three other victims, including two children, lost their lives. In the last 12 months in the Halton region 2,000 telephone calls were received on the wife assault help line and countless families sought shelter at Halton Women's Place.

November is wife assault prevention month, an opportunity to reflect on these lives and to refocus Canadians on the issue of domestic violence. Communities, schools, service clubs, individuals and governments must dedicate resources to ensure that women and their children are safe from violence. It is especially important to break the cycle and allow young Canadians the chance to grow up to be healthy, non-violent adults. Cutbacks to social services in favour of short term tax breaks are not the answer. Violence costs all of us in the long run.

* * *

● (1405)

[*Translation*]

ONTARIO

Mr. Jean-Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs asked Ontario to help him have Quebec recognized as a distinct society. The minister seems to have forgotten that, as long as Ontario will not respect its French speaking minority, that province cannot be a credible voice in the constitutional debate.

Ontario still refuses to comply with section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, thus denying the educational rights of its minority. Moreover, the Harris government made deep cuts in services to francophones. It reduced by 27 per cent the budget of the Office of Francophone Affairs. It also eliminated the Council for Franco-Ontarian Education and a number of other services provided in French.

Ontario has become an anglicizing ground for francophones: 38 per cent of Franco-Ontarians speak English at home. This figure says it all about the assimilation of Franco-Ontarians.

* * *

[*English*]

LITERACY

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Wednesday is national child day and there is no better gift to give children than literacy.

Canada's children are among the most fortunate of the world and yet they may be facing an ever-increasingly complex world with a false sense of security. More than 40 per cent of Canada's current adult population do not have the literacy skills for today's information based economy and worse, many of these Canadians do not recognize that this is a problem. Young people are getting mixed messages on the home front about the value of education and may not understand that high level literacy skills can bring a personal joy as well as economic prosperity.

Although it is a life-long process, literacy begins at birth and flourishes, we know, when reading is encouraged in the early years by parents in the home. It certainly does not help that the government is still forcing Canadian consumers to pay high GST on books for the family.

We cannot change attitudes but we can change circumstances. Children are the key to this country's future and right now parents need to purchase books for their homes without punitive taxes. We can give the gift of literacy, the best tool for our future prosperity, a fresh start by helping parents read to their children.

* * *

CHILD POVERTY

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 1989 the House unanimously voted to end child poverty by the year 2000.

Today's report card shows that not only is the government not keeping to its commitment, it is making the situation worse. Since 1989 the child poverty rate has increased by 46 per cent, bringing Canada's total of poverty-stricken children to 1.4 million, the second highest rate in the industrialized world.

Clearly the Liberal government is not providing the solutions that Canadians need and want. Poor Canadians need jobs that pay a fair wage. They need universal child care and other resources to help them break free of the dependence cycle. Canadians need adequate and affordable housing and educational opportunities that are not biased against the poor.

In 1993 the Liberals said they wanted to give children the best possible start in life. Why have they not done so?

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government recognizes the importance of small businesses in our economy.

Over 660,000 jobs have been created since October 1993. Small businesses have created 88 per cent of these new jobs. As a responsible government we have dedicated ourselves to creating a healthy economic environment which fosters jobs and economic

growth. Deficit reduction targets have been met consistently, interest rates have declined and inflation is under control.

Red tape has been cut, administrative burdens have been reduced and government programs have been simplified and focused so that they serve the clients efficiently and effectively. This type of partnership is the reason why Canada is projected to rank first in economic growth among the G-7 countries.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's infrastructure program has been a great success in the riding of Peterborough. In the city and county it helped fund almost 100 valuable projects.

I urge the government to build on the experience of the first program to design another even better one.

For example, the new one might deliberately set out to bring in private sector funds. Or it might be designed differently in different parts of the country to meet special regional needs. Or again, special priority could be given to projects which create jobs for young people. Yet again, a portion of the funds could be reserved for special national projects such as research and development.

● (1410)

We need a new redesigned program that builds on the strengths of the national infrastructure program, and we need it soon. If provinces such as Ontario do not support it, the federal government and the municipalities should continue without them.

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[Translation]

MONTREAL ECONOMY

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the governments of Canada and Quebec have decided to coordinate their efforts to help Montreal's economic recovery.

A new organization will be set up today to coordinate efforts to promote Greater Montreal's international development. This organization, which will be called Montreal International, will welcome foreign investors, provide information to them, and also seek foreign investments.

It will have a budget of \$10 million. The governments of Canada and Quebec will provide \$4 million, while \$5 million will come from the private sector and \$1 million from the municipalities that are part of Greater Montreal.

Montreal International is proof that we can accomplish great things when the various levels of government and the private sector work in close co-operation.

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CHILE

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, to welcome the President of Chile, Eduardo Frei.

It has been over 50 years since a leader of the Chilean government visited Canada. This is therefore a landmark occasion.

I am delighted that negotiations for a bilateral trade agreement between Canada and Chile have been successful and that President Frei has just signed the agreement. This will make it easier for Chile to join NAFTA. This is a very important step in the process of continental economic integration.

I hope that this visit by the Chilean president will enhance the already excellent relations Chile has with Canada and with Quebec.

* * *

[English]

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is time for a fresh start for the next tiger on the Pacific rim, British Columbia. But predicted growth for B.C. this year is a sum total of zero. This can be directly attributed to the Liberals' high tax, high regulation and big government attitude toward one of Canada's most economically successful provinces.

The government is choking one of the strongest regional economies in this country due to its unwillingness to listen and respond to the concerns of British Columbians. Generations of Liberals and Tories have sought to deny British Columbia its rightful status as an international trading power. They view B.C. as a hinterland which must fend for itself during the bad times and be exploited during the good times. Take from British Columbia and spend somewhere else.

British Columbians know that electing Reformers to the House of Commons in the next election is in their best interests: people who are committed to delivering tax relief and who have a vision of British Columbia as Canada's economic tiger, the next tiger of the Pacific rim.

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[Translation]

CANADA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have reason to be confident about the future. Last week, the OECD and the Royal Bank of Canada issued their economic forecasts for Canada.

According to the OECD, Canadian economic growth should rise to and hold at 3.25 per cent annually, compared to 2.5 per cent for all other industrialized countries. In addition, experts predict that the unemployment rate will drop to 8.7 per cent over the next six

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years, while inflation will continue at approximately 1.5 per cent annually.

For its part, the Royal Bank of Canada is not hesitating to predict that Canada's economic growth will exceed that of all other G7 nations in the years to come.

These forecasts and numerous others made public recently confirm that our government has made the right decisions to set Canada back on the road to prosperity.

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[English]

CROSSLEY CARPET MILLS

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the largest employers in Truro is Crossley Carpet Mills. Last Friday I attended the official celebration of Crossley Carpet Mills receiving certification of its ISO 9002 registration. Crossley is the first carpet mill in Canada to receive this international quality standard certification. Indeed, Crossley is only one of two carpet mills in all of North America to be registered.

With hard work and funding support from ACOA, this 100 per cent Canadian and Nova Scotia owned company is now uniquely positioned to compete in international markets where ISO registration is becoming a prerequisite for contract bidding.

• (1415)

Enabling local businesses to stay competitive is just one way that the government is helping to sustain and create jobs in every region across Canada. I extend my best wishes for continued success to Les Single's management and staff at Crossley Carpet Mills.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to members' attention the presence in the gallery of two members from the United Republic of Tanzania. I refer specifically to the Hon. Matheo T. Qares and the Hon. Bakari Mbonde, ministers of state in the Prime Minister's office.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the members of the board of directors of Canadian

Airlines resigned en masse on Friday, for fear of being held financially responsible in the event of a bankruptcy.

The crisis at Canadian is blatant proof of the government's mistake in maintaining two international carriers in Canada with public funds. The Bloc Québécois, it will be remembered, proposed the amalgamation of Air Canada and Canadian to ensure we would have a solid air carrier in Canada and to save as many jobs as possible.

Can the Prime Minister assure us today that his government is not intending to inject more money in Canadian, as his Minister of Transport has said on several occasions in recent weeks?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have nothing to add to what the Minister of Transport has said in the House. He is following the situation at the moment. The company, the union and other groups have held negotiations. The government is watching the situation, but I have nothing to add to what the Minister of Transport had to say ten days ago.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport had a bit more to say. I see that things are changing perhaps somewhat. The Minister of Transport told us that there was no question of more money being injected in the current situation. To my knowledge, the situation has worsened with the resignation of the board of directors.

The *Globe and Mail* also pointed out on the weekend that the government was prepared to help Canadian if employees agreed to the company's restructuring plan, which included a salary cut of 10 per cent.

Could the Prime Minister also assure us that his government is not getting ready to provide renewed assistance to Canadian should the employees agree to the restructuring plan?

[English]

Mr. Stan Keyes (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker, the government has no intention of putting money into Canadian in this particular situation.

The hon. member opposite spoke of the employees at Canadian. I think it is important for the House to know that the Minister of Transport had this to say to the Air Transportation Association of Canada in Montreal just a couple of hours ago. He said:

I know it requires very difficult decisions from the employees—employees who have sacrificed much already. I have always been impressed by the dedication of Canadian Airlines employees, their commitment to quality, their commitment to service, and their belief in their airline. That dedication, and that spirit, will be just as crucial to Canadian's future as to its past.

Structural problems require structural solutions. The president of Canadian Airlines has brought them forward. We hope that Cana-

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dian Airlines is successful and remains another one of our proud airlines in this country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have to assume that there is some slight problem, since the entire board of directors resigned. I would assume something is awry.

The federal government has also, we think, made a mistake in allowing American Airlines to acquire a significant number of Canadian shares. This did not enable Canadian to become cost effective, as we have seen. On the contrary, this decision gives rise to concerns over American control of the air transportation industry.

Would the Prime Minister make a commitment to not change the legislation and the regulations in the air transportation sector, which would have the effect of allowing greater foreign, especially American, involvement in this sector?

• (1420)

[*English*]

Mr. Stan Keyes (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian Airlines has not come forward to this government with any proposal to increase foreign investment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

In the event that Canadian, a major air carrier in Canada, goes bankrupt, the government would have to decide on the redistribution of the international routes it currently holds.

Can the Prime Minister guarantee today that he will not allow foreign companies to get hold of these international routes and that he will preserve the Canadian character of this industry?

[*English*]

Mr. Stan Keyes (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the member opposite, this government is not going to practise the politics of division. We are going to hope that Canadian Airlines is successful. We do not want to look at the glass half empty, as the hon. member does so well.

Canadian is doing the best job it can. Right now it is trying to restructure to ensure that it is a viable airline in this country, and that is what we are hoping for. We are not looking down the road at the failure that this hon. member hopes to see, obviously, in the way he has been questioning this government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, by not being forward looking to the future, this government is going to ensure that Canadian has no future whatsoever.

Canadian's financial difficulties also directly affect the public purse, for the company has to repay loans from the federal government.

Can the Prime Minister commit to bring pressure to bear on Canadian as a debtor in order to encourage the only possible solution, namely amalgamation of Canadian and Air Canada, the only way to ensure the future of this industry and the only way to save thousands of jobs?

[*English*]

Mr. Stan Keyes (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian Airlines, again we say, has brought forward a plan to restructure its airline. Let us have a look at the plan that President Kevin Benson has brought forward. Let us hope that the plan, in concert with the contributions that would be made by the employees of Canadian, would help to see this airline get back on its feet and be a viable competitor in the airline industry in this country.

* * *

CHILD CARE

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, since national child day is on Wednesday, the government should take a look at a recent Angus Reid survey. It shows that 57 per cent of parents with young children work simply to make ends meet. A majority of those same people would like to have the freedom to have one parent stay at home with their kids if they could afford to do that.

This government needs to make Canadian families a priority. It needs to lessen their tax burden and give parents back some choice in how they raise their own children.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Why will the government not convert the child care deduction into a tax credit and extend it to all parents with children 12 years or younger, including those parents who choose to raise their kids at home?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reality of child poverty in this country, which is a rich country, is of course of major concern to the Government of Canada.

Last week the Canadian Council on Social Development reported that most children in Canada are doing well. That is partly good news. However, we cannot ignore those children who actually live in poverty. This is why campaign 2000 recognized that the major reason for children not doing well is unemployment. For this reason, this government is insisting a great deal on improving the economic climate in this country. That is the way we will be able to do more.

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This government has already done quite a lot in the last few years. This government has doubled the working income supplement provided to low income families. The Canadian government spends more than \$5 billion a year on child tax benefits that has been paid to three million Canadian families already.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, when the minister talks about campaign 2000, we have our own plan for that as well, and that is that every Canadian family would have a tax break of \$2,000 by the year 2000. I think that would be far more practical.

The Reform's fresh start platform makes Canadian families a priority. It will increase the spousal exemption by over \$2,500 and extend child care deductions to all parents, including those who choose to raise their kids at home. That was my initial question and I did not hear anything like an answer for that, and so I will just ask it again.

What sort of specific tax relief does the minister have to offer Canadian families?

• (1425)

First, why will he not consider raising the spousal exemption, which would be a fairly simple thing to do, and second, to extend the child care deduction to all parents?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member cares to take a look at the existing provisions for married families, as my colleague has said, first of all in the last budget we doubled the working income supplement for families with four children by \$1,000. At the same time the married credit exists which reduces income taxes by as much as \$1,500 a year. There is a special supplement out of the child tax benefit for parents who care for preschool children at home.

The fact is if one takes a look at the vast range of policies introduced by this government and by previous Liberal governments, the hon. member will see that it is concern for children that has been upper most in the government's mind. If one would like to compare that to the vast majority of recommendations from the Reform Party, which would maintain the level of poverty as opposed to alleviating it, one would begin to understand that the line in the sand has been drawn and no amount of camouflage by the Reform Party will hide that.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, our recommendation is that parents who choose to raise their kids at home up to age 12 should be celebrated, not just the preschool ones he talks about.

The average Canadian family pays a staggering 46 per cent of its income in taxes. Children across the country are living in families

where both parents are stressed out from having to work nights and weekends to pay for this Liberal government's spending habits.

Canadians have suffered a \$3,000 pay cut since this government took office in 1993, and the finance minister knows that.

Instead of being satisfied with the status quo of high taxes, why will the minister not simply balance the budget and then give Canadian families some much deserved, much needed tax relief?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, why does the hon. member not admit where she and her party are going to find the money to provide the tax cut for the rich? The first area in which they will find it is by abolishing the Canada pension plan which is very crucial for Canadian families. It is the principal source of support. Under the Reform Party the Canada pension plan will disappear.

The second thing they will do is eliminate equalization for a number of provinces. Is she saying that people who live in Saskatchewan or Nova Scotia do not have families and are not entitled to the same level of public services as Canadians in other provinces?

The Reform Party would eliminate the maternal benefits under the employment insurance program. Is the hon. member in the process of saying that people who are on employment insurance are not entitled to maternal benefits?

Let us understand that what the Reform Party is suggesting is that in fact those programs which go to help low income families, families on welfare and middle income families would be gutted and eviscerated by the Reform Party in order to take care of the richer people in this country. This government will never accept that.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Before the House adjourned, probably looking for an excuse to extol the virtues of the employment insurance reform, the Minister of Human Resources Development stated, and I quote: "Five hundred thousand Canadians who were not previously covered by unemployment insurance will now qualify".

Will the minister confirm that, instead of more Canadian workers being covered, starting on January 1, 1997, some 500,000 workers, mainly very low wage earners working fewer than 15 hours per week, will start paying premiums they are not required to pay at present, while the vast majority of them will never receive benefits because they will not qualify?

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Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is not a new issue. It has been raised time and time again. I must emphasize that the employment insurance reform promotes active measures, in contrast to the previous system, which was universally condemned as inefficient and encouraging people to stay at home.

• (1430)

We now have a system ensuring that, by the year 2000 or 2001, the \$800 million investment fund we are creating will be the sole source of funding. Those who work part time may of course pay premiums, but they will also be covered by the employment insurance system to the extent that they pay premiums.

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government has given workers earning between \$39,000 and \$42,500 and the businesses they work for a break on premium payments. The truth is that an additional 500,000 people will have to pay premiums.

I would like the minister to tell me if he has read his department's paper on this and if he can confirm that only 45,000 of these 500,000 new contributors, very low wage earners, will be eligible, as indicated in a paper released by his own department on January 23, 1996. Is that how the Liberals intend to fight poverty?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will confirm this: Starting January 1, 1997, an additional 500,000 Canadians will be covered by unemployment insurance, while they were not previously, because they will now qualify for coverage under this system.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister often brags that Canadians are benefiting from lower interest rates. He claims that Canadians will buy more houses and more new cars, saving hundreds of thousands of dollars due to lower interest rates.

My question for the Prime Minister is what about those Canadians who cannot afford to buy a home or a new car and who work two or three jobs to feed their kids. What is the government going to do for those children who do without so much, including time with their parents who have to work so hard and so long to feed this hungry government?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact is if the members of the Reform Party will take a look at

what has happened over the course of the last three months in terms of the benefits of the reduction in interest rates, what they would see is that housing starts are up. They would see that the announcement came out today that manufacturing shipments are up. They would see that the basis of the economy is becoming stronger and stronger. And as a result of that, thousands of Canadians are going back to work and it is the families of those Canadians that are going to benefit.

Over 700,000 new jobs have been created by the private sector; 46,000 jobs were created last month alone by the private sector. The fact is these people who are going back to work will be able to provide for their families as a result of the economic conditions set in place by this government.

The members of the Reform Party, they who have no policy to increase employment, no economic philosophy designed to help the middle class in this country, should not stand up in the House and essentially say that we will live with the dual economy, that we will live with an economy that benefits the rich and ignores the poor.

Canadians will not put up with it and neither will we.

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I find it sad and unbelievable that this finance minister will stand up and brag about an unemployment rate of 10 per cent when the United States has an unemployment rate of 5 per cent.

The Reform Party has brought forth a tax relief plan that will completely eliminate the tax burden of over 1 million Canadians. Our plan will leave more money in the pockets of these families to spend on groceries, rent and clothing.

My question for the prime minister is specifically how and when will his government provide tax relief for Canadian families.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is quite the opposite. The Reform plan will not leave more money in the hands of average Canadians.

• (1435)

The Reform plan will take away their pensions, it will take away their health care, it will take away welfare benefits for those who are at the lowest end. The fact is that what the Reform Party will do will gut the Canadian dream for the vast majority of those who depend on government for help.

There is one other thing. The Reform Party ought to understand that what it is in fact advocating is a tax cut now and a massive tax increase for the next generation of Canadians. What it would do is impose on young Canadians a burden of deficit reduction, and we will not do that.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]***COAST GUARD**

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

The minister, who is bent on implementing a new tariff structure, will release this week an impact study on the fee structure for services provided by the coast guard to commercial shipping. However, we have serious reservations about the credibility of this study, which we have with us, since it seems to have been drafted specifically to support the minister's intentions.

Will the minister admit that the study, which he commissioned, is nothing but a report to accommodate him, since it does not take into account several essential parameters, such as the increase in the price of oil in the east that will result from the new tariff structure, and the jobs that will be lost because of increased competition from American ports?

[English]

Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a member of the committee that asked for the study, I am sure the hon. member is very much aware that the study is a very objective study. In fact, it is so objective that it has looked at seven of all the activities that impinge on ports and indeed the whole business of shipping.

I will go a little further. This report looks at 1,200 critical movements of commodities in the Canadian shipping business and has examined a dozen or so of them in particular. It has consulted from coast to coast, many meetings in this country. I have met with the marine advisory board. I met with certain other sectors of the shipping industry to discuss the progress of this report.

I have to tell the hon. member that despite his misgivings it is a very objective report carried out by a very credible third party with no connections to the government. It was done at the behest of the committee on which the hon. member serves. He will be apprised of the results when it is completed in the very near future.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how can the minister accept a study which says the impact of its tariff structure will be negligible, considering that, for example, this new tax will reduce by 15 per cent the profits of iron ore companies on the north shore and will result in the closure of the Port-Cartier mine two or three years earlier than expected, thus worsening the unemployment situation in a region that is already hard hit?

[English]

Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I will say it in another manner. The hon.

member is aware of the objectivity of this study. It has examined seven aspects that impact on the marine transportation business in this country and on the commodities. In fact, the 1,200 runs I talked about cover almost 90 per cent of all the commodity runs by shipping in this country.

I see the hon. member smiling. I do not know where he is getting his figures with respect to Port Cartier and its closing down, but it is impossible to measure every single aspect. I remind him that the study that was done was done at the request, in fact at the insistence, of the committee on which he serves.

We are responding to the request of the committee, of which he is a member. The results are objective and the study will show that there are some conclusions that he will be able to study in the very near future.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the government saw fit to open the borders to American competition against Canada's air carrier industry through the open skies policy. While I did not object to having a more open and competitive industry, I do question why the minister did this without first levelling the playing field on federal fuel taxes.

My question is for the Minister of Transport. Given that these American competitors have significantly lower fuel taxes and that fuel costs are a major component of an airline's operating expense, will the minister take immediate steps to lower the tax on aviation fuel in order to permit Canadian aviation companies to compete equally?

● (1440)

Mr. Stan Keyes (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we in this government, and in particular the Minister of Transport, pride ourselves in listening to any suggestions being brought forward by the members opposite.

The member also spoke of the open skies agreement that has taken place between Canada and the U.S. Let us look at what it has done. It has created 100 new scheduled transborder routes, 24 new routes by Canadian air carriers, 33 Canadian air carrier flights which are now scheduled flights, 54 new U.S.—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Keyes: I guess they do not want to hear the good news.

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It has created 54 new U.S. destinations non-stop from nine Canadian cities. For Air Canada there are 1,000 new jobs. For Canadian Airlines there are 700 new jobs. It is a good news scenario.

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting that the parliamentary secretary talks about 700 new jobs at Canadian when 16,000 are in jeopardy through its policies.

This government supported free trade with the U.S.A. and open skies with American airline companies, both of which have increased competition against Canadian companies. Airport and air navigation service deficits are now nearing full elimination.

Given the government's agenda to open the borders to American competition and the removal of many aviation oriented expenses to the government, can the minister advise this House why he continues to allow aviation companies to be charged an unfair level of special taxes, taxes that are destroying Canadian Airlines and putting 16,000 jobs at risk?

Mr. Stan Keyes (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is asking a question that deals with two subject matters.

Quite frankly, when he talks about 16,000 jobs being at risk, this has to do with an airline called Canadian that is trying to restructure its organization, trying to make a viable airline of itself.

I am surprised by the remarks from the Reform Party because it is the Reform Party itself, the member for Calgary Centre who said that there is no viability in making cash flow from the government to Canadian Airlines. That is not what Canadian Airlines is asking for. It is not asking for anything more than the time it needs to restructure its organization in order to save those 16,500 jobs.

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[Translation]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the solicitor general.

Last November 13, Marcel Audet, an RCMP informant, revealed that he had arranged, on behalf of the RCMP, to buy cases of machine guns, explosives, grenades and even rocket launchers with arms traffickers associated with the Akwesasne reserve.

Since it is worrisome, to say the least, to know that an individual can purchase rocket launchers in Canada, can the minister confirm whether the Akwesasne reserve is still an important point of entry for arms traffic and can he tell us what his services have done to stop these illegal activities?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker,

I am unable to give such a confirmation. The problem is not confined to one location, but police forces, both federal and provincial, are working jointly to tackle this situation. They are making extraordinary efforts to limit this situation.

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary.

Still according to Marcel Audet, "senior officials" in the RCMP put a stop to his mission and blocked the arrest of kingpins in the trafficking network.

Can the minister explain to us why the RCMP did not arrest such dangerous traffickers when it was possible to do so?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with the premise of my hon. friend's question. I cannot confirm these allegations, but I can add that Mr. Audet's complaints are subject to investigation by the RCMP's Public Complaints Commission, and I think that we should wait for the result of that investigation.

* * *

[English]

TRADE

Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade.

Today we will be signing a free trade agreement with Chile in Ottawa. When we look at the profile of trade and investment between Canada and Chile, it looks pretty positive already. Could the minister please tell the House what additional advantages we will be achieving from this agreement?

● (1445)

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning President Frei of Chile and our Prime Minister signed a protocol on a free trade agreement that will bring about tremendous new momentum in terms of trade and investment between our two countries. That will lead to jobs and economic growth for both Chile and Canada.

Immediately, Canadian exporters will no longer face an 11 per cent duty when their goods and services go over the border. This will give them a considerable cost advantage. More secure investment can now be obtained in Chile for Canadians.

All of this will be in advance of when Chile comes into the NAFTA, giving Canada a head start on our friends in the United States who hopefully will now come to the table to bring Chile into the NAFTA and complete the arrangement the Prime Minister was a part of just four years ago. This will lead to hemispheric free trade and again, more jobs and economic productivity.

*Oral Questions***KREVER INQUIRY**

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Liberals have stalled, blocked and gagged the Krever inquiry so that families will not find out the reasons for tainted blood. Their lawyers say that cabinet secrecy prevents the release of vital documents to Krever in the interest of national security.

What possible public interest is this weak health minister protecting?

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Health, Lib.): None, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, these secret cabinet documents bracket the time when the Liberals were taken out of government by the Tories. It looks very much like health scientists had told cabinet far more than previously had been thought.

Which administration is at fault: the Liberals under the current Prime Minister or the Tories under Mulroney?

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member opposite is obviously reading a lot of spy novels and has a collection of conspiracies which he wishes to put forward from time to time.

The hon. member ought to be aware the decision was reached not by Health Canada but by the Privy Council Office that certain information would not be forthcoming. That goes back well before we became part of this particular government.

If the hon. member has a specific question on a specific point in terms of the evidence act or anything connected thereto, he should pose that question, put it in writing, and I am certain the clerk of the Privy Council will provide all of the necessary information.

[Translation]

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

Last week we learned that the government has once again refused to provide documents vital to the needs of the Krever inquiry. These documents, which date back to 1984, could provide details to the commissioners on the circumstances underlying the crisis.

Would the minister tell us why the government is refusing to provide the Krever commission with the documents requested of it?

[English]

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we ought to be clear here. This government has provided literally hundreds and hundreds of documents to the Krever inquiry. Numerous individuals from various departments have provided testimony under oath to the Krever inquiry.

I believe the documents in question go back to 1984-85. If there are specific concerns or requests that the hon. member has, as I indicated in my previous answer, the clerk of the Privy Council, where the decision has been made—it was not by the Minister of Health—will provide the necessary information to the hon. member.

[Translation]

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, would the minister agree that it is up to Mr. Justice Krever and not the minister to decide whether these documents are useful? Will the minister agree to leave the decision up to Mr. Justice Krever and to provide him with what he has asked for?

[English]

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I certainly disagree with the premise of the hon. member's question.

First and foremost, the Government of Canada has provided a great deal of information. All of the information that I have within my purview I believe has been provided. However, if there is a specific request, the decision has been made by the clerk of the Privy Council and that is where the question should be posed. That is where the written question should be posed. I am sure the clerk will provide the information to the hon. member.

* * *

● (1450)

TAXATION

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last week it was full page newspaper ads. Tomorrow, the premiers of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick will be in Toronto basically to do an infomercial for the harmonized GST. Stay tuned while they claim that it will slice and dice and leave you with abs of steel and even grow hair. They can spin it any way they want but businesses and consumers in Atlantic Canada have very serious concerns about the harmonized GST.

My question is for the finance minister. Is this infomercial and all this propaganda all that Canadians can expect for their billion dollars?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that underlying the hon. member's question is a deep feeling of resentment that Atlantic Canada is getting its act together.

What is very clear is that the hon. member simply cannot stand to see those provincial governments on behalf of their populations in co-operation with the federal government providing a base for sound taxation and competitiveness of their small and medium size businesses.

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I would have thought that the hon. member, in support of Atlantic Canadians, would have stood up here and congratulated those provincial governments because what they are doing is saying they do not want dependence. What they really want to do is to be able to govern for the benefit of their own populations.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of resentment out there but it comes from all the other provinces that are footing the bill for the billion dollar payoff to Atlantic Canada, especially to the premiers.

The Halifax chamber of commerce is also resentful. So is the Retail Council of Canada and the Canadian Real Estate Association. They all have grave concerns with this deal. It is complicated, confusing and a killer of jobs.

Even those groups who before were supportive of the harmonization deal now have grave reservations about this particular brand of snake oil. Will the minister scrap it and go back to the drawing board?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member ought to know, the fact is that we have told the retail council that we will sit down and work out any administrative glitches. In fact, we are in the process of doing that.

That again is not what the hon. member is really driving at. What he stood up and said was why should Atlantic Canada be able to benefit when the rest of the country does not in this particular deal. The fact is that Atlantic Canadians did not stand up and complain when the minister of energy dealt with the tarsands in Alberta. Atlantic Canada did not stand up and complain when Ontario was provided with stabilization payments.

What we are really dealing with here is a rump of a party that refuses to take a pan-Canadian view of what the nation is all about.

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INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board.

In view of the recently announced unemployment rate of 10 per cent, can the President of the Treasury Board inform this House whether the government intends to launch a new infrastructure program this winter?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the unemployment rate at 10 per cent is too high, but I think we should remember that since we have come into office we have helped to create about 700,000 jobs. The unemployment rate has decreased from 11.4 per cent to the present 10 per cent.

The best way in which a government can help to decrease that unemployment rate is obviously by helping to decrease interest

rates. We now have the lowest interest rates in 30 years which of course helps investment and creates jobs.

The infrastructure program has created jobs, probably more than 110,000. We are still in the process of considering the pros and cons and the decision should be made within a few weeks.

* * *

[Translation]

APEC SUMMIT

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

This coming November 23 to 25, the 18 heads of state who are members of APEC, the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation Forum, will be meeting in Manila, the Philippines. José Ramos Horta, Nobel Peace Prize winner and human rights activist in East Timor, has been denied access to the Philippines at the time of the summit, however.

Does Canada intend to make protests to the government of the Philippines for reversal of this decision and for José Ramos Horta to be allowed onto its territory?

• (1455)

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the decision as to who is allowed into the Philippines is one to be taken by the Government of the Philippines alone.

During the meeting of the Asia-Pacific group, I will certainly be meeting on a number of occasions with other ministers of foreign affairs to discuss human rights issues in that region of the Asia-Pacific. As I have already said, it is very important to have direct and constructive commitments with other countries. This is, unfortunately, a decision for the Government of the Philippines and there is nothing Canada can do about it.

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, does the minister not acknowledge that such treatment of a Nobel Peace Prize Winner is truly unacceptable, and that Canada ought to react vigorously?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we certainly support the whole notion of having NGOs and a wide variety of people meeting in a parallel fashion during the APEC meetings. We have pioneered in those areas and I hope that during the course of the meetings there is the opportunity to visit the NGO groups and an opportunity to have exchanges with them.

However in this kind of case I do not think it would be proper for us to interfere in the decisions of another government when it has made a decision based on whatever the situation is there. I can

Oral Questions

certainly assure the hon. member that we will be continuing our own dialogue with the NGOs about the situation in the Asia-Pacific.

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FISHERIES

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans defends his decision to open up the food fishery this year saying that it is based on scientific evidence. However, I have in my hand an internal DFO document written by the minister's own bureaucrat responsible for counting fish in Newfoundland. It reads: "I know of no subsequent scientific analysis that has updated the assessment of 2J-3KL stocks. I was therefore quite dismayed that a recreational food fishery will be allowed".

Now that we know that no scientific evidence exists to justify the food fishery in the largest fishing areas surrounding Newfoundland, why does the minister continue the crime of ravaging what is left of the Atlantic stocks simply to buy votes?

Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will answer the question, although I certainly do not accept the premise.

I would advise the hon. member that he should stick to the subjects he is aware of and knows. I make many decisions.

Mr. Morrison: Why? You do not.

Mr. Mifflin: The member has asked a question, he should please listen for the answer.

All scientific decisions like any other decisions are made on different pieces of advice. I have to tell the hon. member that this particular memo which I have not read because it was not addressed to me was addressed internally.

I went ahead with the food fishery on the basis of the advice from my senior scientist. The advice was that a closely controlled food fishery like the one which was implemented and executed with lots of surveillance would not impede recovery of the cod stock. That came from my senior scientist and it was on that basis that I went ahead.

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister said that the food fishery was opened up based on scientific evidence and analysis. The conclusion of this letter is: "I am disappointed and disheartened that important decisions are being made that disregard the scientific advice from this region".

Canadians and Atlantic Canadians want to know why the minister went ahead and opened up the fishery against the advice of his own scientists?

Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to tell the hon. member one more time and

more forcefully that the advice I got from my scientist was that a closely controlled food fishery executed the way it was would not impede the recovery of the cod stocks.

The food fishery was done for the right reasons; 94,000 Atlantic Canadians had the advantage to engage in the food fishery like other people in the gulf area; 5,000 checks were made; 1,200 tonnes were caught all within the parameters of the advice given by the senior scientist.

What does the Reform Party have against Atlantic Canadians? Once again it is fighting the last war on the wrong information.

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CANADIAN AIRLINES

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Vancouver accountant Mr. Robert Morrow has produced some figures which assume the loss of 16,400 direct jobs and 54,000 indirect jobs if Canadian Airlines International hits the wall. And assuming that one-third of those people are re-employed afterward, it estimates a net loss to the Canadian treasury of \$2.5 billion.

• (1500)

Has the federal government done any substantial analysis on the same situation and what changes, regulatory or financial, is the government prepared to make in the face of these potential losses?

Mr. Stan Keyes (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have said time and time again in this House today, and on previous days from the Minister of Transport, that the entrepreneurial spirit which gave birth to Canadian Airlines in western Canada is alive and well in western Canada, especially in Alberta and B.C.

We think on this side of the House that this airline has a bright future if it can take the difficult steps to reorganize. That future is based on hard work, good business and not on government handouts to fund losses.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the Right Hon. Hubert Alexander Ingraham, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, and accompanying Parliamentary delegation.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I wish to inform the House that Thursday, November 21 shall be an allotted day.

The Speaker: We will now proceed to tributes, first for the Hon. Joe Ghiz, former premier of Prince Edward Island, and then for Mr. Tom Bell, a former member of Parliament.

THE LATE HON. JOSEPH GHIZ

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great Canadian, a former provincial premier, an eminent jurist and a dear friend.

Joe Ghiz was born in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island in January 1945. He was educated at Dalhousie University where he obtained degrees in commerce and law, and thereafter obtained a master's law from Harvard University in Boston.

Each of us will hold a different memory of Joe Ghiz. We might recall his passion for this country and his devotion to keeping it united and strong. We will think of how a premier from Canada's smallest province contributed in such a way, a significant way if you will, to the public policy process of the country.

We might recall how his father was a shopkeeper, an immigrant from Lebanon. We might also think of his passion for constitutional reform and how he pursued that goal so fervently; how his love for his country characterized both his private and, yes, his public life.

Or we might think of the islanders he represented as premier, constituents who knew that when Premier Ghiz went to Ottawa he was there to fight on their behalf.

Our individual memories of this remarkable man reflect the depth of his contributions to our country. His ability to balance regional interests with the good of the country was not only remarkable, it was refreshing.

At 51 years of age the contributions of Joseph Ghiz far outstripped his years. We cannot help but pause and regret that he has passed at such a young age.

As a friend he was generous with his kindnesses and generous with his time.

• (1505)

He was acclaimed as one of Canada's greatest orators but he was also a great listener. He was a serious man who believed very strongly in his views. He never took himself seriously. His sense of humour was engaging and it was genuine. He has left with us a marker for our identity as a nation, the duality of interest that pulls a British Columbian out of B.C., a Manitoban out of Manitoba, a Quebecer out of Quebec and, yes, an islander out of Prince Edward Island.

Joseph Ghiz will always be remembered as an islander, but it is for his contribution to Canada and to the unity of our country that we stand in tribute for him today.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I wish to join with many Canadians and members in this House in offering my deepest condolences to his wife Rose Ellen, his daughter Joanne and his son Robert, and to assure them that he will be remembered and be remembered with great affection.

Tributes

[Translation]

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, speaking on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I want to pay tribute to Joe Ghiz, Premier of Prince Edward Island from 1986 to 1992, who passed away recently.

Born in 1945 to parents of modest means, he was the eldest of five children. He was a law student at Dalhousie University, where he graduated with top honours.

This Premier was particularly well-known for his work on constitutional matters and his defence of the rights of francophones when he improved the francophone school system in his province. He had also hoped to conclude a treaty of reconciliation with the native people. Under his government, the smallest province in Confederation enjoyed exceptional visibility.

More than anyone else in English Canada, he defended special status for Quebec. In January 1995 at McGill University, at a seminar on the future of Canada, he said that since the quiet revolution, English Canada had not understood the legitimacy of the aspirations of the people and the government of Quebec, hence the failure of Meech and Charlottetown. People criticized Quebec's veto, although the accord granted the same privilege to Prince Edward Island. People criticized the concept of Quebec as a distinct society but there was no objection to his province having special status regarding the number of members of Parliament it could elect, irrespective of its population. When Quebec got something from the federal government, it made the headlines in English Canada, but there were no headlines in the *Globe and Mail* when the federal government moved 2,000 jobs from Ottawa to Summerside and Charlottetown.

Mr. Ghiz understood Quebec. Unfortunately, his premature decease has bereft English Canada of a voice for moderation, of a man who understood the Quebec people and their political aspirations.

Speaking on behalf of my colleagues in the official opposition, I wish to extend my sincere condolences to the family and relatives of Mr. Ghiz.

[English]

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Reform Party I would like to join with other members of this House of Commons in paying tribute to a friend and certainly a leading Canadian, the Hon. Joe Ghiz.

Other speakers, certainly the Minister of Health, have already mentioned some of Mr. Ghiz's political aspects and aspects of his legal career. What I would like to do is just make a few personal comments in terms of my association with Mr. Ghiz on more than one occasion.

I had the opportunity work with Mr. Ghiz specifically during the Meech Lake negotiations in 1990. I found that in the formal and informal associations that we had and the conversations at that time I came to understand his political objectives, his concern for

Tributes

Canada and certainly his own personal story which was often brought into a variety of situations and discussions at a time when we were negotiating the future of Canada.

I remember that one day after a lot of meetings and discussion, some of us were together to talk informally and sat together to unwind. In that conversation I remember Mr. Ghiz in an informal, interesting and entertaining way telling of his father's corner grocery store and how the son of a Lebanese immigrant could grow up, receive a law degree and become premier in this country of ours that he so lovingly and compassionately called Canada.

• (1510)

For Mr. Ghiz, Joe, Canada was a land of freedom and opportunity where everybody had a chance to achieve their own personal dreams just like he was able to during his short period of time on this earth.

I know many people, and in our personal conversations I found him to be a warm, considerate, down to earth person who genuinely cared about other people's families, their communities and certainly their personal concerns. In his own humble way he wanted to build a nation and find a place in that nation for Prince Edward Island.

Today we offer the sympathies and prayers of all of us in Canada to his wife and children at his home. He will be long remembered, and his contribution will be remembered specifically by those in Prince Edward Island, but all other Canadians who associated with him will never forget Mr. Joe Ghiz.

The Speaker: Colleagues, I permit myself a few words on your behalf. I too knew Joe Ghiz personally. When you are in opposition and you travel around the country, it is not always that a premier receives you in his office. But he did that for me on a visit to his island.

Reference has been made by other parliamentarians to the fact that he came from Prince Edward Island, undoubtedly the smallest province in Canada. But on your behalf I note that not only did he come from our smallest province but our smallest province gave us one of our biggest Canadians.

* * *

THE LATE TOM BELL

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague, the hon. member for Sherbrooke, and the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada I would like to extend our sincere condolences to the family of the late Tom Bell. His passing is a great loss for New Brunswickers and all Canadians. He suffered for a long time with his debilitating disease and he is now at rest.

Tom Bell was a quiet, gentle, caring man who touched the lives of all those who knew him. He left an indelible mark on the hearts of many of us. He was a personal friend. Tom always had a smile on his face. Tom left us with his distinguished record of service and many fond memories of the times we shared with him. The judge with the big heart will not easily be forgotten.

Tom's career began in my home city of Saint John where he was born in 1923. He grew up in the city, married his wife Patricia, and attended the University of New Brunswick. During the second world war Tom served in the merchant navy and always remained deeply committed to the welfare of our veterans. The merchant navy men had an honour guard for him at his funeral which I had the honour to attend. He was a long time member of the Royal Canadian Legion as well.

Tom was called to the New Brunswick bar in 1951 and began his law practice in Saint John. In 1953 his career took a turn and he decided to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather, who had represented Saint John in Parliament for 10 years, from 1925 to 1935.

Tom ran for the Progressive Conservative nomination in 1953 in the federal riding of Saint John—Albert, as it was known then. He was elected to the House of Commons in 1953 and was re-elected seven times, in 1957, 1958, 1962, 1963, 1965, 1968 and 1972. During his distinguished 20 year parliamentary career he served as parliamentary assistant to the minister of trade and commerce, parliamentary secretary to the minister of justice, opposition House leader and party whip.

From 1956 to 1958 Tom was president of the Young Progressive Conservatives. His parliamentary career lasted through the terms of four Prime Minister, Louis St-Laurent, John Diefenbaker, Lester Pearson and Pierre Trudeau.

• (1515)

I remember a conversation I had with a senior Liberal senator last year who talked about Tom Bell. He said: "Politics is not like it used to be during our time, Elsie". The senator said that he and Tom would stand in the House, point fingers and debate, but at the end of the day they would sit down over coffee and discuss together how they could help their people in the region.

In 1974 Tom Bell left federal politics. He was appointed to the provincial court where he presided over the family, youth and traffic courts for 20 years. The people of Saint John lost a great member of Parliament, but gained an honest and fair judge. Despite his career change, he remained as deeply committed to his constituents and to his community as the day he was first elected.

He was a member of the Carleton and York Club and an active member of the Trinity Anglican Church. He was a former member of the Kiwanis Club, the Byng Boys Club of Saint John, the 26th Battalion Overseas Association and chairman of the board of the

Tributes

New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island division of the Canadian Corps of Commissioners.

The Progressive Conservative Party of Canada was honoured to be represented by such a great man. Tom Bell set an example not just for our party, but for all politicians, personally and professionally. He was a man of integrity.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Tom's family, his wife Patricia, his sons Michael, Andrew and James, his daughter Melanie, his brothers Robert and Lawrence and his many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, like all Canadians, I was deeply saddened to learn that Judge Tom Bell, a fellow New Brunswicker, had passed away.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my condolences and the condolences of the Liberal Party and of all of our Liberal colleagues to his wife Patricia and to their four children, Michael, Andrew, James and Melanie, whom I have known for many years and have had the pleasure to teach, and to his brothers, Robert and Lawrence.

Tom Bell was elected in 1953 to represent the riding of Saint John—Albert, which is now part of my riding of Fundy—Royal, where, as my hon. colleague from Saint John has just said, he went on to serve seven consecutive terms as the member of Parliament, spanning more than 20 years.

During his political career he served in numerous positions. He was the opposition House leader, the party whip and the parliamentary secretary to the ministers of industry and justice.

We younger members of Parliament are sometimes told that things were different in the old days. We are told that, even when debate in the Chamber became heated, outside it was civility and courtesy that prevailed. Often when we are told this, we are told that the reason for this was that there were leading members like Tom Bell.

Tom Bell was that kind of member who could be vigorous with his advocates, vigorous on behalf of his constituency and vigorous on behalf of his region and his party in this House. Harsh things could be said in debate, but afterward they were not only fully prepared to relax and talk things over with colleagues and adversaries alike, if they were like Tom Bell they sought out their fellow members, regardless of their political affiliation.

It was for that reason that Tom Bell had only friends here. A tough partisan in the House, outside he was a convivial and wise friend and counsellor to all.

On leaving politics he was appointed a provincial court judge, where he served the people of Saint John for 20 or more years,

presiding over family, youth and traffic courts, as well as carrying out general provincial court work.

He is remembered as the gentle judge, as someone who always maintained a positive demeanour and who took an avid interest in those who came before him. Many will remember him fondly for his humour, his wit, his enthusiasm and his positive outlook.

• (1520)

Judge Bell had strong ties to his community. He was a lifelong member of branch 14 of the Royal Canadian Legion. He belonged to the Carleton and York Club and he was a former member of the Kiwanis Club. He was the former chairman of the 26th Battalion Overseas Association, president of the Byng Boys Club of Saint John and chairman of the board of the New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island division of the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires.

I first became interested in politics in my early teens and it was Tom Bell, his stature and his integrity, that inspired me to look on politics as an honourable profession. I know that even members of my family supported Tom Bell, the man, in spite of political affiliation.

I knew Tom Bell and of his commitment to his family, his God and his country which is unrivalled and unsurpassed in Saint John. I am proud and honoured to have known him and our community is richer for his life which lives on in a better New Brunswick.

Perhaps Dennis Boyle, a Saint John lawyer, summed it up best when he said that the community will be a poor place because of this loss, but it will be a better place because he was in it. With his passing last week, our country has lost a great public servant and we will all miss him.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues of the Reform Party and all parliamentarians, I would like to join in the tribute to Thomas Miller Bell.

Mr. Bell passed away after a long illness on Tuesday, November 12, 1996 at the age of 73. Thomas Bell was born in Saint John, New Brunswick on January 11, 1923. He served in the merchant navy in World War II, sailing in the North Atlantic, the Mediterranean and in the Far East. After the war, he played an active role in the welfare of veterans and was a long-time member of the Royal Canadian Legion, branch No. 14. He received his law degree from the University of New Brunswick at Saint John in 1951 and worked as a barrister at law for several years.

Tom Bell had a long and distinguished career in this House. He was first elected in 1953 in the riding of Saint John—Albert. He was re-elected seven times. He was appointed to several positions both in opposition and the government such as the parliamentary secretary to the minister of trade and commerce in August 1957 and parliamentary secretary to the minister of justice in 1959. He

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also served as the opposition whip from 1968 to 1973 and as the opposition House leader from 1973 to 1974.

After his service in this House, he was appointed to the bench in 1974 where he was known as the gentle judge. He presided over family, youth and traffic courts as well as general provincial court work.

Everyone who knew Tom Bell has fond memories of this outstanding individual. He was best known for his sense of humour and his unwavering commitment to the community.

As a member of Parliament, he modestly and quietly supported his constituents, whether it was representing them here in Ottawa or meeting with them in his riding.

As a judge, he upheld the spirit of the law, never losing sight of what was best for the individual or the community. He was known for saying: "Do what is proper and people will acknowledge it". I am certain that those who knew him have acknowledged all that he did for the people he served.

On behalf of my colleagues in the Reform Party, I would like to extend our deepest sympathies to his wife Patricia, his sons Michael, Andrew and James, his daughter Melanie, his brothers Robert and Lawrence and other members of his family. His presence will be sadly missed.

The Speaker: Colleagues, I inadvertently did not see one of our colleagues who wanted to pay tribute to Joe Ghiz. Would you give me permission to re-open tributes to Mr. Ghiz?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

THE LATE HON. JOE GHIZ

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of my colleague, the hon. member for Sherbrooke, and the Progressive Conservative Party to pay tribute to the late Joe Ghiz.

We wish to extend our heartfelt condolences to Mr. Ghiz's wife Rose Ellen, his mother Marguerite and his children Robert and Joanne.

● (1525)

The nation shares in their grief. Canadians strongly admired Mr. Ghiz's commitment to the people of Prince Edward Island and the people of Canada. Canada has lost one of our strongest defenders.

Mr. Ghiz became leader of the official opposition in 1982 and premier from 1986 to 1993. Following his departure from public politics, he was appointed as a provincial supreme court judge.

He will be remembered in Prince Edward Island as the man who signed the deal that built a bridge from the island to the mainland. It was one of Mr. Ghiz's dreams but he built many bridges in our Canada of today.

Across Canada he will be remembered for his tireless support of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown accords and his support of a united Canada. The failure of both accords was a severe blow to him. Yet despite these setbacks he was always viewed by islanders and Canadians from coast to coast as a winner.

It is always tragic when someone leaves us so young. This country has lost a great Canadian too soon.

Members of the Progressive Conservative Party extend their prayers to the family of Joe Ghiz. He was a great man and he will be greatly missed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I am honoured to table in both official languages the government's response to 16 petitions.

* * *

WAYS AND MEANS

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I wish to table a notice of ways and means motion to amend the Income Tax Act. I am also tabling explanatory notes and I ask that an order of the day be designated for consideration of this motion.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources entitled "Streamlining Environmental Regulation for Mining: Final Report", an interim report having been tabled in December 1995.

The report reiterates the government's commitment to protection of the environment and suggests a number of initiatives to encourage mining investment through greater regulatory clarity, certainty and efficiency.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response thereto within 150 days.

USER FEE ACT

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-349, an act to provide for parliamentary scrutiny and approval of user fees set by federal authority and to require public disclosure of the amount collected as user fees.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to introduce my private member's bill, the user fee act. In the last 10 years user fees have doubled in the amount the government collects.

Many people are concerned that in the last several years as the public service has come under increased scrutiny, many government agencies are using their abilities to increase user fees to become profit centres for the government. In doing that they avoid being chopped. This is a big concern of many people and myself.

In the 1993 auditor general's report it is stated: "We are concerned that Parliament cannot readily scrutinize the user fees established by contracts and other non-regulatory means. There does not exist a government-wide summary of the fees being charged, the revenues raised and the authorities under which they are established".

• (1530)

Probably the best example of how user pay without user say has gone awry is the case of the Pest Management Regulatory Agency. Its budget has gone from \$14.2 million in 1994 to \$34 million in 1996, chiefly because there has not been parliamentary scrutiny of what is going on in bodies like this.

I would urge my fellow colleagues to read the legislation and if they have questions to contact me and hopefully they will ultimately support it.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS COMPENSATION FUND

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present today.

The first is from Saint John, New Brunswick. The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that police and firefighters place their lives at risk on a daily basis as they serve the emergency needs of all Canadians.

They also state that in many cases the families are left without sufficient financial means to meet their obligations.

The petitioners therefore pray and call on Parliament to establish a public safety officers compensation fund to receive gifts and

Routine Proceedings

bequests for the benefit of families of police officers and firefighters who are killed in the line of duty.

TAXATION

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition comes from Oshawa, Ontario.

The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that managing the family home and caring for preschool children is an honourable profession which has not been recognized for its value to our society.

The petitioners therefore pray and call on Parliament to pursue initiatives to assist families that choose to provide care in the home for preschool children, the chronically ill, the aged of the disabled.

LABELLING OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the final petition comes from Mount Albert, Ontario.

The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that the consumption of alcoholic beverages may cause health problems or impair one's ability, and specifically, that fetal alcohol syndrome or other alcohol related birth defects are 100 per cent preventable by avoiding alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

The petitioners therefore pray and call on Parliament to enact legislation to require health warning labels to be placed on the containers of all alcoholic beverages to caution expectant mothers and others of the risks associated with alcohol consumption.

JUSTICE

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present the following petition from my constituents of Comox—Alberni.

There are 4,028 signatures here for a total of 5,528 signatures of petitioners from my riding. That represents 10 per cent of the voters in my riding, a significant number.

The petitioners request that Parliament allow Canadian citizens to vote directly in a national binding referendum on the restoration of the death penalty for first degree murder.

HIGHWAYS

Mr. Gary Pillitteri (Niagara Falls, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present a petition that has been certified correct in form and content.

The petitioners, residents of Niagara Falls and the Niagara peninsula, are calling on Parliament to urge the federal government to join with the provincial government to make the operation of a national highway system possible.

Routine Proceedings

JUSTICE

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by more than 1,700 citizens of Peterborough county, mainly residents of the townships of Belmont-Methuen and Asphodel and the villages of Havelock and Norwood.

These are quite isolated communities which tend to fall between the cracks in terms of police and telephone services. A pedophile was recently released into one of these communities.

The petitions ask that the legislation be changed so that repeat sex offenders are never released from any correctional facility. Changing the legislation would prevent a repeat offender from moving into any neighbourhood.

I urge the government to move forward with Bill C-55.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions.

The first one is that the petitioners are concerned about the 7 per cent GST, that it is an unjust taxation of reading materials. They urge all levels of government to demonstrate their support of education and literacy by eliminating the sales tax from reading materials. That is from petitioners in British Columbia.

• (1535)

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is pursuant to Standing Order 36. It asks Parliament to proceed immediately with amendments to the Criminal Code that will ensure that the sentence given to anyone convicted of causing death by driving while impaired carries a minimum sentence of seven years and a maximum of 14 years as outlined in the private member's Bill C-201 sponsored by the Reform member from Prince George—Bulkley Valley.

TAXATION

Mr. Gordon Kirkby (Prince Albert—Churchill River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, the petition has been certified correct as to form and content.

The petitioners ask and call on Parliament to refrain from implementing a tax on health and dental benefits and to put a hold on any future consideration of such a tax until a complete review of the tax system and how it impacts on the health of Canadians has been undertaken.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions today. The first

petition deals with a request to Parliament to increase the penalty for drinking and driving.

PROFITS FROM CRIME

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition asks Parliament to pass legislation to ensure that no criminal can profit from their criminal activity.

TAXATION

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from Thunder Bay, Ontario. The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that managing the family home and caring for preschool children is an honourable profession which has not been recognized for its value to our society.

The petitioners therefore pray and call on Parliament to pursue initiatives to assist those who choose to provide care in the home for preschool children, the chronically ill, the aged or the disabled.

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[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Question No. 72 will be answered today.

[Text]

Question No. 72—**Mr. Morrison:**

Regarding the results based reporting using CIDA's program priorities: (a) what methodology is used in reporting the results by program priority of CIDA's bilateral disbursements in the 1996-97 main estimates part III, (b) how does CIDA decide how much to allocate to each priority, (c) how will the results from last year's expenditures affect next year's disbursements, (d) how can the 21.4 per cent of bilateral disbursements that went to meeting basic human needs, according to the estimates, be traced back to the actual contributions, service contracts, et cetera in order to utilize lessons learned over the years, and (e) why are CIDA's program priorities not applied in the countries in transition program?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for Francophonie, Lib.): a) CIDA has set up a system to track disbursements for the six program priorities identified in the government's 1995 policy statement, "Canada in the World." CIDA officers code projects according to these priorities; if a project addresses more than one, percentages of the project according disbursements are allocated to each of the priorities it addresses. At the end of each year, this weighting is used to measure disbursements for each priority. In sum, CIDA is collecting data on the disbursement of aid by priority, at both the branch and agency levels.

A bilateral project performance review system is also being established to assist managers and staff with managing for results, learning from experience and reporting on achievements. Two

components of this new system are a framework of results and key success factors, which will be used to assess project performance, and a set of assessment tools. This new system will also allow CIDA to report on the results of its bilateral activities by program priority.

b) The government has set a target of 25 per cent of official development assistance, ODA, to be channelled to basic human needs. CIDA programming is being monitored to ensure that we continue to make progress toward meeting this target. Allocation targets have not been set for the remaining priorities. Rather, funds are allocated on a geographic basis, with increasing emphasis on selected low income countries. Country and regional programs are being designed or modified in view of CIDA's six program priorities, with consideration to the development needs and priorities of the country or countries involved.

c) Most projects are implemented over a three to five year period. In the shorter term, however, project audits, evaluations, and ongoing monitoring provide feedback which is used to adjust projects where necessary.

d) CIDA codes its projects according to its six program priorities. Monitoring, audits and evaluations are carried out on projects to identify lessons which are related to these priorities. CIDA has also begun a performance review of its programming in basic human needs which will bring together lessons from a wide range of projects and programs.

e) The six program priorities set out in "Canada in the World" apply to the ODA program. ODA is defined by the development assistance committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD, as funding transferred "to developing countries and multilateral institutions provided by official (government) agencies—which meets the following tests: (i) it is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective; and (ii) it is concessional in character and conveys a grant element of at least 25 per cent.

Most of the assistance provided to the countries of central and eastern Europe—countries in transition—is not ODA. Only a few countries in the former Soviet bloc are classified as "developing". It is therefore not subject to the six ODA priorities established by "Canada in the World." Nevertheless, the program integrates many of CIDA's priorities, including governance, human rights and democratic development, the environment and women in development.

It should be noted, that, although responsibility for delivering the program for central and eastern Europe was transferred to CIDA by "Canada in the World", the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade continues to be responsible for its overall policy direction.

[Translation]

Mr. Zed: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Routine Proceedings

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if Question No. 39 could be made an order for return, that return would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 39—**Mr. Adams:**

Have there been any government implementations with regard to the recommendations numbered 104 to 110 inclusive, Chapter 13, "The North", from the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development's Report "It's About Our Health. Towards Pollution Protection. CEPA Revisited", June 1995?

Return tabled.

* * *

[Translation]

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

CANADIAN AIRLINES

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 52, I request leave for an emergency debate on the future of Canadian Airlines International.

As you probably know, this company is facing a major crisis. Last Friday, November 15, the board of directors announced that they were all resigning, because they feared they might be held financially responsible in case of a bankruptcy.

These last few years, significant efforts have been made by employees, governments and investors to try and save the company. In 1992, a major \$1.6 billion restructuring plan was implemented, which included the conversion of \$800 million in debt into capital stock, a \$246 million investment from American Airlines, a \$200 million contribution by the employees, \$120 million in government loans, the buy-back of three Airbus planes by the federal government for some \$150 million when their market value was less than half that amount, a \$40 million service contract for these three planes, the federal government's commitment to protect Canadian Airlines' monopoly over the most profitable routes in Asia, et cetera.

Government Orders

However, we have to acknowledge that the company still continues to be buried under huge debts, and financial assistance from the federal government will not help the airlines out of this fix. Despite all the favours granted and efforts made by the government, profits still seem out of Canadian Airlines' reach.

The federal government cannot witness this disaster and do nothing. Bankruptcy would mean the loss of more than 16,400 jobs throughout Canada and the transfer of thousands of jobs from Canada to the United States, for instance.

• (1540)

So, consideration of the future of Canadian Airlines International is urgently required. Such an emergency debate would emphasize the opportunities provided to both Canadian and Quebec parliamentarians and make public the government guidelines in order to avoid a major upheaval in the Canadian air transport industry.

I therefore ask, Mr. Speaker, that you consider favourably my request for an emergency debate.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: My dear colleague, I did receive the notice you sent me earlier today. Although this is a very important matter, I do not think it meets the requirements for the House to hold an emergency debate for the time being.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

GREAT LAKES REGION OF AFRICA

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to report to you and the House the remarkable events of the last week and the reasons that Canada decided to take the lead in putting together a mission to bring aid to the starving masses of refugees in central Africa.

As everyone knows, the situation on the ground has improved dramatically since our initiative was launched last week. Refugees in the hundreds of thousands have crossed the border back to Rwanda. This change is due in large part to the resolve shown by the international community under the leadership of Canada.

Much has been written and said about the actions of our government, about our decision to try to break the logjam at the United Nations, to galvanize the international community into action and to offer Canadian leadership for a dangerous but essential international mission.

[Translation]

But when all is said and done, the basic fact is that Canada acted because it was the decent, human thing to do. We acted because two world wars and forty years of peace keeping have taught us that the world cannot turn its back on turmoil and disaster.

We acted because deeply ingrained in our very being as Canadians is a very clear and basic understanding that we are citizens of the world, that we take that citizenship very seriously, and that when it is time to stand up and be counted, Canada is there.

[English]

That is the way it was through two world wars and 40 years of peacekeeping. As the most privileged of nations we have understood and valued the responsibility of world citizenship.

There is no mystery to this impulse, no calculation, no posturing. The government felt it. The leaders of the four opposition parties, whom we consulted, felt it. The men and women of our armed forces, who without hesitation stood ready to take the lead, felt it. Our diplomats in posts around the world and public servants in foreign affairs, national defence and CIDA, who helped plan and organize this initiative, felt it. People across the country felt it.

Therefore, the government decision to act, to appeal to the international community, was not a difficult one. It was not taken lightly. Committing men and women to dangerous situations, even as part of a large international force, can never be taken lightly. It was the natural thing to do. It was arrived at without fanfare, without drama and breast beating, but in the typical, understated, matter of fact Canadian way. There was a job to be done and we were ready to do it.

• (1545)

[Translation]

So in itself, our decision was not remarkable. What was remarkable was the reaction of the international community. I wish every Canadian could have listened into the telephone conversations I had last week with the leaders of other nations.

From the leaders of the wealthiest, most powerful countries to the leaders of small, developing nations, including United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the reaction was consistent and powerful: Canada's identity as a peacekeeper, as an honest broker, as a force for decency and humanity around the world—again and again this is what the world's leaders told me.

Sometimes it is useful to raise our heads, clear our minds, and see ourselves as the world sees us. Last week, in our appeals to the nations of the world, in our presence at the United Nations, in the quick and responsive moves of General Baril and his colleagues, the world saw a voice for reason and compassion. A new world nation, without the burdens of history that weigh so many nations

down. A diverse, bilingual country that knows the importance of accommodation and understanding.

[*English*]

They saw a country that had no self-interest in its call for action, that had a proven record in peacekeeping and sensitive military operations, that had the credibility to pull together an international effort and the ability to execute it.

They understand that our history, our experience, our reality made us uniquely suited to this urgent task, a country without colonial past in Africa, a bilingual country with links to and an ability to operate in this French speaking corner of the world, an international player that is at once a G-7 nation and a middle power.

These are the reasons we launched our initiative last week and why we succeeded in convincing the international community to join us. However, it is only a prologue to the actual humanitarian operation. Canadians deserve to know what we are getting into and what we can reasonably expect.

As I speak, more than 400,000 refugees have crossed back into Rwanda and the Goma area. Another 150,000 are expected to cross over in the next few days. These developments are all very good news, but let us not forget that fighting continues in the region and the situation is very fluid.

[*Translation*]

We know the changes on the ground will affect the mission. Let me tell you what is being done to address this changing situation. Yesterday, we announced new humanitarian aid to respond to changing needs on the ground. And we dispatched General Baril to assess the situation in the region.

Canada and all nations involved in this humanitarian effort are in close contact. We will be meeting with other countries in Stuttgart on Thursday to discuss the impact of these events on the proposed military mission. The Secretary of State for Africa will be on that continent later this week, consulting with governments there. And in the coming days, Canada will be convening a meeting of aid donors to mobilize support for the resettlement of those returning.

• (1550)

[*English*]

But the international community must continue its effort to facilitate delivery of humanitarian aid by civilian relief organizations to alleviate the immediate suffering we have all seen in our homes on our televisions every night and to facilitate the return to their homes in Rwanda of those refugees who want to return.

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Canada will continue to take the lead in working with the international community. We are all committed to ending the suffering.

[*Translation*]

For Canada, the last week has been a special moment, a moment of which we can all be proud. We do not know now exactly what the coming days and weeks will bring. And in those difficult moments we must remember what this mission is all about. In a century ravaged by war and aggression, we have called for a commitment that has nothing to do with conquest or glory.

[*English*]

We are not entering into combat with an enemy. Our only enemy is human suffering. Our only foe is hunger and disease. Our only adversary is pain and misery.

We have already won an early battle against moral blindness and self-interest by galvanizing the world community into action. Let us now do what is required to complete the work.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Unfortunately for the Leader of the Opposition, a member of the Reform Party has the floor.

Mr. Gauthier: You are not going to recognize me, Mr. Speaker?

The Deputy Speaker: It seems that, before the Prime Minister made his speech, it was agreed that each party would speak in turn, and it is now the Reform Party's turn.

Mr. Gauthier: We each have our turn, but it is not my turn.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the constituents of Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt to speak to the motion before the House today, this take note debate we have before us on Canada's current and future commitments in Zaire.

Canada has apparently agreed to take command of the mission in Zaire. The intentions of the government are noble. However, it has proceeded carelessly and without clear goals. For this reason the Reform Party cannot yet support the mission to Zaire.

My colleague from Red Deer, the Reform Party critic for foreign affairs, outlined the Reform's position with a particular focus on the foreign affairs perspective. Now I will provide a military assessment of the mission.

To me and other members of the House this take note debate is purely smoke and mirrors. Although we would like to see pure consultation with members of the House of Commons, we recog-

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nize that there will be no vote with respect to this information that comes out of this debate today.

For more than a week now the media has been reporting that the government has decided to commit troops to Zaire. Senior defence officials have advised the cabinet that we have the capability to participate in this force. Military preparations have been under way for some time now.

The Reform Party does not yet have sufficient information to support the government's decision to lead the mission to Zaire. Canadians recognize the importance of stability in Zaire, Rwanda, Burundi and the area, repatriating the refugees to their countries of origin and relieving the malnourished and starving. This mission will be extremely dangerous and Canadians should be fully aware of that fact.

It is dangerous and this is not a peacekeeping mission. Combat capable troops are required for this mission to Zaire. We will not be monitoring opposing armies but playing a role in providing humanitarian aid to refugees in the area and providing them with a safe corridor through which they can move to their countries of origin.

• (1555)

Only three days prior to announcing this mission I sat in a briefing by senior military officials and they confirmed for me then and there that Canada was not capable of supporting three large scale missions at the same time. We are already in Haiti, we are already in Bosnia, and Zaire will make our third large scale mission.

Only three days after defence officials confirmed we cannot handle three missions we hear from the Prime Minister that indeed we can. We wish we could support this mission but the government has not proven that it can complete the mission, although not through any fault of the troops or the military itself. They are among the best in the world when they are allowed to be, when they have the equipment that will allow them to be the best. We often hear when cabinet ministers talk about missions like this "I talked to the troops and the troops say they are ready to go and they are capable of going".

I was in the Canadian Armed Forces and in 1974 when my ship, the HMCS *Gatineau*, was asked to go to Vietnam to participate in the withdrawal of American troops I was ready, willing and able. I wanted to go. Unfortunately I was on training in Halifax at the time in fleet school. The commandant called me into the office and said: "Hart, would you like to go on this mission with your ship? It would mean you would have to come off training prior to completion of your course". I said: "Sir, I am ready, willing and able and I want to be on that mission". Unfortunately the decision was made that I would stay back and stay on training and I did not proceed with my ship to patrol the coast of Vietnam.

That is the response that we will get from every man and woman in the Canadian Armed Forces. Of course they are ready, willing and able and they want to participate in the missions because that is what they are trained to do. That has nothing to do with the responsibility of this government, to make sure that they are properly equipped to do the job and that there are enough people to make sure they can complete their missions.

The Reform Party is concerned about the government's handling of Canada's defence policy. One of the most important tasks of any national government is to support the existence of sufficient combat troops, capable armed forces, to match the nation's defence policy. This is not something that is only desirable, this is a responsibility and a requirement of any sound national government. It would be an abdication of the government's responsibility to fail in this regard.

Not long ago the Liberal government changed 50 years of Canadian defence policy by saying that Canada does not have nor does it need to maintain combat capable land forces. In fact, it was the Minister of Foreign Affairs who told Canadians that he does not believe Canada has combat capable forces. Now he is sending that same military, the one he said is not combat capable, into the line of fire.

The former chief of defence staff told Canadians that land forces are unfit to fight a serious war. These are his words: "If the government asked me to go into a high intensity theatre with the equipment I have today I would have to say I can't do it". This is a quote from the last chief of defence staff, one who has never lost the support of this government. Its former hand picked chief of defence staff does not think that we can handle this mission.

The former minister of national defence, contradicting his own white paper, said that General Boyle's comments were pretty fair. He added that General Boyle's comments reflected the 1994 white paper on defence.

Then the Minister of Foreign Affairs went even further in reversing the defence policy of the government: "A lot of the defence purchases have been geared toward the peacekeeping effort because that is the changing nature of the world. The notion that we might re-engage in a major conflict like the second world war does not seem to be there".

Our armed forces personnel must be first and foremost combat capable professionals which then and only then enables them to be finest peacekeepers or humanitarian aid providers in the world. If the Minister of National Defence or anyone in the cabinet would listen today I would tell the government to do four things.

The first is stabilize the size of the Canadian Armed Forces. I would urge them to review the work of the special joint commission, which said that the size of 60,000 troops, which we are now

headed toward, is too small given the international commitments that we have facing us today.

• (1600)

Second, ensure that our land, sea and air troops are combat capable. Third, provide the adequate equipment and training. Fourth, I would ask the government to clearly establish a fixed number of troops which can be utilized on international peacekeeping missions, and also to establish how many missions can be supported at any one time. I will tell the House why this is important.

For each mission of 1,000 troops we have committed to a foreign country, that ties up 3,000 troops because there will also be 1,000 who will be training for the mission, waiting for their next rotation. There are the 1,000 in theatre and there are also 1,000 who have also come out of theatre and are waiting for 18 months before they can be put into service in an international peacekeeping role again.

It can be seen that 1,000 troops commits 3,000 troops in actual numbers to an international commitment. Therefore with Bosnia, with Haiti and now with Zaire we will have some 3,300 troops in international theatre. That ties up almost 10,000 of our land forces of an army of approximately 24,000. That is putting an unprecedented amount of stress on our Canadian Armed Forces.

However, there has been no move by the government or the defence minister to look at the things I have mentioned. We are still waiting to hear about the purchase of submarines for the navy to make sure that our navy is combat capable. We are still waiting for word on the replacement of the Sea King helicopters. In fact, another Sea King crashed last Thursday.

We keep hearing from the government how great everything is but in the meantime our Sea Kings are falling out of the sky. Our engineers, pilots and our maintenance crews can keep them flying with gun tape, chewing gum and baler twine for only so long. It is a testimonial to our Canadian ingenuity and skill that our men and women were able to win the William Tell competition and become top guns.

The government should live up to the combat capability to which was committed an entire chapter in the 1994 white paper. It is fine and dandy for the Minister of Foreign Affairs to commit our armed forces to Liberal government foreign policy objectives. However, they must not be trained only for peacekeeping. They must remain combat capable professionals. That is how our Canadian troops earned their well deserved reputation in the first and second world wars, the Korean war, the Gulf war and peacekeeping missions over the last 50 years. They must be given the proper tools. They must be given the proper mandate and the rules of engagement so that they can get the job done properly with minimal risk to themselves.

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We have two primary concerns, saving lives in Zaire and keeping our own Canadian Armed Forces troops alive. The Liberals can use these vain ploys to garner peacenik votes but they must remember that the lives of Canadian troops are at stake. Our men and women are not going out on a picnic in Zaire. They will be going into one of the most ruthless war ravaged areas in the world where hundreds of thousands if not millions of people are very desperate. This is a very dangerous situation and we should not be going into it lightly.

There is always a human price that will be paid and it will not be paid by these fat cat Liberal ministers who sit back and suck cappuccinos while our men and women put their lives on the line for the Liberals' half baked political decisions.

How many members of the House know the actual human toll for our mission in Bosnia? Forget for a moment the suicides, the broken families, post traumatic stress disorder. Do the Liberals actually know how many Canadian casualties there were for Bosnia? I bet few of them know. There were 120 Canadian casualties, including 12 deaths. I do not know about anyone else in the House, but when it comes to senior military personnel's telling members of the House of Commons that we cannot support three major international contributions at one time and when the former chief of defence staff and the Minister of Foreign Affairs have questioned the combat capability of our military, I must doubt our abilities to support this third large scale engagement.

• (1605)

With all this information, I am not as quick as my Liberal friends to send our men and women to Zaire. Let me be perfectly clear. I believe that in principle we should be able to go to Zaire. However, to ensure that Zaire is a success and to take some stress off our troops possibly we should look at pulling out of Bosnia.

It is time to completely turn over all peacekeeping responsibilities in Bosnia to the European countries. Let me say that again. The Reform Party supports in principle taking command of the multinational mission in Zaire. However, from the perspective of military and human resources we may have to leave Bosnia and the IFOR mission to do so. There is nothing wrong with admitting that we cannot do all things for all people.

We must establish clear priorities. We are faced with Bosnia, Haiti and now Zaire. Canadians would like to know from this government are these missions in Canada's national interest and, in particular, if they are how do we deal with these missions with our small army and our limited resources.

Canada has performed yeoman service in the former Yugoslavia and it is time to pass the baton to other countries.

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The defence minister says the mission to Zaire will last only six months. I think this is grossly naive. Income tax, as we all remember, was meant to be a temporary measure, and look where that got us. We were told in 1991 that Bosnia would be short term. We have been there for five years. The mission in Haiti goes on and on. Just last week the UN was asked to extend its mandate for another nine months, until the end of July 1997.

On the topic of mission extensions, when the Minister for Foreign Affairs was asked how long our stay would be in Zaire he stated the Liberal line four to six months. However, he has already intimated that he expects there will be a need for a force to stay on for a new phase after the first six month deployment expires.

The government intends for our troops to remain there for possibly years. It just will not admit it at this point to Canadians. It refuses to be honest with Canadians about what it is really committing to. How long does it really plan to stay in Zaire? If the first six months are projected to cost \$100 million, how much will the extended complete mission cost?

The defence minister said he can find the \$100 million in his budget. Liberal math never ceases to amaze me. The minister has a budget for which money has been allocated. I do not remember seeing any line items in estimates or the budget for a mission in Zaire or for a \$100 million peacekeeping slush fund. So where is the money coming from? I am not saying do not go, I just want to know specifically where the money is coming from.

I know the budget accounted for acquisitions of submarines and it also accounted for helicopters, replacements for the Sea King helicopters, but are they going to be the cost of the mission to Zaire? It is most unfortunate that this Liberal government would steal money from a much needed procurement to pay for this mission.

The new defence minister says he wants to institute a morale building attitude. I will congratulate the new minister on his issuing of the Somalia medals, which was long overdue, and also on the purchase of flak jackets and helmets, which in a small way goes toward building morale as well. However, robbing from the submarine program or the helicopter procurement program is not going to help morale. It is going to hurt morale in the Canadian Armed Forces.

The minister has a responsibility to properly equip our troops. That includes giving the navy its submarines and the air force its helicopters. He should not abdicate his responsibility because his buddy in foreign affairs wants to use the military to help in a Liberal leadership race.

Canadians are confident in the ability of our armed forces. However, Canadians are not as confident in the Liberal government's ability to lead a military. Canadians call on the government

to stop abdicating responsibility. We have reached the critical mass where further cuts and reductions to our armed forces will make them an impotent marching band.

• (1610)

Events over the weekend have dramatically overtaken the mandate of the mission and this Liberal government. The initial mission was to establish a safe corridor and to provide humanitarian relief to refugees in the camps. The refugees are now on the move. They are going home. Now the Minister of Foreign Affairs wants our troops to wander through Zaire for some 700,000 other refugees wandering the countryside. The Liberals are struggling to find a reason to be there and they cannot find one.

Even the host countries do not want us there. In fact, Canadian troops were required to deplane without their weapons because Rwanda does not want them there. Is this the kind of situation our people can expect?

The defence minister promised robust rules of engagement. Do these robust rules include sending our troops in without their weapons?

This mission is falling apart. The government should just admit it and keep our people out of harm's way until we can clearly define a mission for them to accomplish.

Our peacekeepers served for a quarter of a century in Cyprus. Today, only a few years after their departure, Greek and Turkish Cypriots are again killing each other.

In conclusion, I would like to quote the past president of the Dominion Command of the Royal Canadian Legion: "The army cannot field a properly equipped division or even a full independent brigade. It would be difficult to man and supply. Still our loyal men and women of the forces continue to serve, many under more extreme conditions short of war than one can imagine. With a targeted military of 60,000 we have less fighting personnel to defend our interests than the number of lawyers in this country".

We want our troops to know we support their collaborative efforts in any regard wherever they are in the world. Whatever mission this government sends them on, the Reform Party will always press the government to ensure there are the proper numbers, to ensure they are properly equipped and to ensure that they are properly supported.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to applaud the government's decision to take the initiative in the matter before us today because on eight occasions over the past three weeks the official opposition had asked the government to take a leadership role in this matter. We thought it was essential for Canadians to work together and make a contribu-

tion to help improve the situation in that part of the world, which, obviously, is experiencing great difficulties at the present time.

We are happy with the leadership shown by Canada and that is why, on behalf of my party, I was pleased to tell the foreign affairs minister that we are supporting this initiative.

Things are moving fast. As the Prime Minister said, the situation is evolving hourly in that part of the world. Let us not forget that, at the beginning, there were 1.2 million refugees stuck in Zaire. All of sudden, to everybody's surprise, 400,000 of them went back to Rwanda; apparently 100,000 more are on the way at this very moment, and these figures are changing constantly as the situation evolves; it also appears that 100,000 refugees are fleeing to the western part of Zaire because of the fighting and that 500,000 to 600,000 people are still stuck in refugee camps.

If there are situations where political parties have to show altruism and to set aside the daily interests of the House of Commons to take joint action, this is definitely one of them.

• (1615)

The Prime Minister should shortly receive a report by Lieutenant-General Maurice Baril who left yesterday on a reconnaissance mission.

This whole situation has led to a number of conclusions. First, we all know that Canada cannot act alone. This is clear both to the government and to the opposition. We do not have the physical means to act alone in an effective manner.

But Canada has an essential role to play in the sense that we can use our international prestige to convince the international community. It is important that Canada plays a leadership role to maintain dialogue and facilitate a consensus on the best way to put an end to the tragic situation faced by these people.

We can convince the governments concerned to accept the presence of multinational troops on their territory. Some work is being done on the diplomatic front. We are involved. We want all solutions to be found and agreements to be reached so that the situation can evolve as it must. It is important, as the Prime Minister said, that Thursday, in Stuttgart, Canada show leadership so that a consensus can be reached on the adjustments to be made to the UN mandate and so that things are clear. We need a crystal clear mandate.

However, I would like to give some advice to the government. The official opposition would like the government to follow some advice that we will give from now on.

For the people who have returned to Rwanda, the people who have already decided to go back home, our troops must ensure their safety. These people must be able to go back without

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apprehensiveness. A massacre must be avoided, and the mandate of the Canadian troops will surely be to ensure the safety of those who have returned to Rwanda.

Canada must also give absolute priority, and I believe the Prime Minister was of the same opinion, to providing humanitarian assistance all along the way home for those who are unfortunately still on the road. In the case of those who are back home, and who will certainly go through days of anguish, it must also ensure that water, food and medication can be provided to everyone. Above all, Canada must ensure that there is no repeat of the tragic events we witnessed before in that part of the world.

For the large number of people still stuck in Zaire, and there are 700,000 of them, it is important that Canada help create humanitarian corridors so that help can be provided to them. I think each and everyone of us, in this House but also in this country, was deeply moved by the terrible plight of these people, particularly the thousands of children. We cannot remain insensitive to their situation and the support of our armed forces, our peacekeepers is essential to help create these corridors to send water, food and medication.

Finally, the Canadian army will be able to step in, to work to ensure the safe return of these people, even though their return is a voluntarily one. It goes without saying that our troops will be extremely useful.

However, the rules of engagement of Canadian troops must be very clear. They must be defined, because, unless I am mistaken, the mandate was given under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

• (1620)

This chapter allows the use of force and weapons, should the situation require it. It is extremely important that our government clearly define the rules governing the use of such force or weapons. We will have to make sure our troops are prepared for this mission, which means they will have to receive very clear instructions.

There is no margin for error in that region, where the situation is explosive. Of course, our troops did not have time to get prepared. This is an urgent mission and an extremely important one. Consequently, they must get their orders as directly as possible, and their instructions must be clear, so as to avoid anything untoward.

Canadians soldiers must understand the social and political implications of their involvement. They are in a region where, once again, everything is fragile and they will have to show a lot of tact, diplomacy and understanding for their mission to be successful.

Our soldiers, and their leaders of course, will then have to ensure that the conditions for a durable solution to the conflict can be put in place. We will have to act as advisors while we are there.

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Canada's advice will be most important to everyone. That is why we will humbly submit certain ideas to the government.

We have already suggested that an international conference on the African great lakes region be held as soon as possible. It is important for global partners to discuss the volatile political situation in that region. In the longer term, we must also ensure that all refugees can go back to their country, to the place they came from. I think this is essential if we want to resolve this conflict.

We will have to find ways to disarm the warring factions and to eliminate the causes of war in the area. The international community will have to take action, to do whatever it can to bring about a change of mentality. We can no longer accept situations like the one we saw some time ago and the one we are seeing now. We have to neutralize those who played a leading role in the 1994 genocide. We really have to be on the alert to prevent such barbarities from reoccurring.

Finally, we can negotiate and encourage peaceful relations between the Tutsi minority and the Hutu majority in Rwanda and in Burundi. There is much to do. This is an extremely serious matter for our soldiers, but we are proud to see that Canada will be making its contribution in this part of the world.

We will have done everything possible, as human beings, to end the atrocities that have been brought to our attention and the misery we saw, and I am certain that the intervention of Canadian soldiers will help save thousands of lives. That is why we are proud to contribute to this operation.

In closing, I would like to remind members very briefly that 1,500 soldiers will be sent to Zaire ultimately. These are the figures we have. We have asked much of our troops since 1992. There are still 1,000 soldiers in Bosnia, 750 in Haiti, 187 in the Golan Heights, 28 in the Sinai, in addition to a number elsewhere. A total of 2,059 Canadian soldiers are or will be on tour of duty in the coming days. This is extremely important. They have our confidence.

• (1625)

We know that despite certain mistakes that may have been made in certain places in the past, the great majority of Canadian soldiers are able to make an appropriate and significant contribution to the world peace process. And it is in this spirit that I would like to join with all members of my party, and all members in this House, I am sure, in thanking Canadian soldiers for the work they are doing all around the world, in thanking the Canadian soldiers who are going to intervene in a situation that is extremely delicate but that does require intervention. We are behind them all the way. We also thank their families for the enormous sacrifice they are making in letting one of their own leave them so that we can play this role in the great lakes region of Africa.

I would also like to thank the government for giving us the opportunity to discuss this issue here in the House. It is important that these things be said. Once again, I would like to reiterate our wholehearted support for this operation. It was necessary for us to show leadership. As the official opposition, we were certain that we could play such a role, and we have full confidence in those who will be called upon over there to carry out these extraordinary duties.

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the United Nations emergency force inaugurated the era of modern peacekeeping. Canada has been in the forefront with its patient explorations, its practical ideas, and its pragmatic compromises.

This has been Canada's trademark, and this same power of persuasion and tenacity which has always characterized Canada, sometimes under difficult circumstances, has been manifested in recent days and recent hours, while the government was dealing with this current crisis.

The Canadian forces have provided the United Nations emergency force with the logistical support that is the backbone of any military undertaking. Over the years, this service has become Canada's specialty, a known quantity, a support on which our international friends have been able to depend to insure the necessary stability and continuity of other peacekeeping missions, for other missions were not long in coming.

In the ten years that followed, two other important peacekeeping missions took place, the United Nations operation in the Congo between 1960 and 1964, and the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Cyprus starting in 1964.

The operation in the Congo, now Zaire, was particularly difficult and somewhat controversial. Many lives were lost and much money was poured into it. As well, we had to resort to force and to interfere in the internal affairs of the Congo. This led eventually to deep divisions between the member states, which threatened the future of the United Nations. There was great danger, and Canadians were responsible for a number of acts of bravery. Two hundred and thirty-four members of the United Nations force lost their lives during this operation.

[English]

Canadians again had special skills to bring to bear. Our primary contribution was in the area of signals and communications. It also helped enormously that so many members of the Canadian forces could speak the common Congolese language of French. There was a humanitarian aspect to the mission to which Canadians contributed foodstuffs.

Canada was in the lead in Cyprus, with Secretary of State for External Affairs Paul Martin Senior providing the crucial diplo-

matic impetus to get UN members behind the idea of a peacekeeping force. Canadian troops were on the island 24 hours after the force was authorized. "You will never know what this may have prevented", American President Lyndon Johnson told Mr. Pearson, then our Prime Minister.

There have been moments of discouragement as peacekeeping evolved, warts and all, but as this House's Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence reminded Canadians in 1970: "For Canadians now to lose heart and reduce its interest in peacekeeping would be an abdication of responsibility. No other country could fill the gap thus opened—and the development of effective peacekeeping would be set back with incalculable but certainly disastrous effect". The committee added: "The work of peacekeeping is not glamorous. It is frustrating. It does not inspire gratitude. It does not directly assist narrow Canadian interests. But it is an essential service—and one for which Canada has special qualifications because of her reputation for fairness and because of her technical skills".

• (1630)

[*Translation*]

Canadians listened to that advice. Canada's commitment toward peace keeping has never faltered. By the end of the Cold War, 80,000 Canadian soldiers had taken part in peacekeeping and it was hard to name a peacekeeping mission under UN or other auspices in which Canada had not played a lead role.

We were the leading world peace keepers, well intentioned, well equipped, well trained. Empirical studies, however, indicate that the funds allocated to peacekeeping were only a tiny fraction of total defence budgets.

At the end of the cold war, peacekeeping expanded and changed dramatically, if we consider the type, form and general nature of these operations. Both Conservatives and Liberals sent 20,000 peacekeepers to the borders of Iraq, to the UN Commission in Afghanistan and Pakistan, to Mozambique, Namibia, Angola, the Western Sahara, to Rwanda and Somalia, to Salvador and Haiti, to Cambodia and the Balkans.

At one point in the early 90s, more than 4,000 Canadian peacekeepers were deployed in various parts of the world.

During those years, mandates remained vague. The risks were greater. Inevitably, the risk of controversy, error and abuse had increased, compared with the time when missions were straightforward peacekeeping operations.

But the challenges were also more numerous. Humanitarian aid and the defence of human rights were very likely to be a major factor in these new operations which, in turn, could act as a catalyst for putting in place democratic institutions.

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[*English*]

In the former Yugoslavia under General Lewis MacKenzie, Canadians got aid to the besieged capital of Sarajevo and elsewhere. They repaired schools, hospitals, roads and they provided medical care. They gave of their own time to the aged and to the young.

In an even more desperate situation in Rwanda, under Generals Roméo Dallaire and Guy Tousignant the Canadian forces cleared mines, delivered aid, purified water and brought critical medical assistance.

[*Translation*]

We cannot ignore the assistance so many other Canadians have provided and continue to provide daily to those who need it throughout the world. I am referring to the NGOs and Canadian religious orders in Rwanda who were the first to draw our attention to the crisis which had developed in that country.

General Dallaire said one day he had seen too many bodies, too many tears, too much human suffering and too much destruction in Rwanda to let us, the international community, go about our business without a care in the world.

We clearly need mechanisms in order to be able to react quickly and effectively to international disasters. Examples of typically Canadian initiatives intended to help deal with international crises are the rapid reaction force proposed by the government, which made its way at the UN, and the Disaster Assistance Relief Team, also known as DART.

[*English*]

Over the last few minutes I have attempted to sketch the context in which the government motion under consideration by this House is set: a Canadian peacekeeping and humanitarian experience, expertise and excellence built up over many years and tested in a wide variety of circumstances; a longstanding Canadian commitment to international co-operation which is very much in our interests and deeply embedded in our tradition; a Canadian leadership role in the international community which is more usual than unusual.

[*Translation*]

And so we come to the obvious conclusion that the world is too small for us to turn our backs on the African continent and all its problems.

I fully support the leadership role assumed by Canada within the international community, as it seeks ways to deal directly and fearlessly with the crisis in Africa.

I would also ask that we intervene in a way that leaves no doubt as to the generosity and firm resolve of this House.

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• (1635)

[English]

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, events have unfolded rapidly in central Africa in recent days. Even before our troops touched central African soil, their positive impact was being felt. Fear of the extremist militias, a fear which had held more than one million refugees in squalid camps in Zaire for two years, was suddenly lifted. I am convinced that this happened at least in part because of the imminent arrival of the international force put together under the leadership of our Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister's decision to offer Canadian leadership for this mission is in keeping with an honourable Canadian tradition, a tradition of unparalleled expertise in peacekeeping and of dedicated humanitarian assistance.

[Translation]

We must credit the activism of the Prime Minister, who reacted vigorously out of frustration with the international community's lack of action. As it was never a colonial power, Canada is in a good position to head the multinational force.

As a member country in the francophonie, which is my responsibility in cabinet, Canada has long had close ties with the countries in that region. In taking the initiative of heading the multinational intervention, the Prime Minister mobilized the international community.

The hope created by the imminent arrival of thousands of troops on a humanitarian mission, one of peace and aid, gave pause for thought to the extremists and hope to the victims, most of whom, need I add, are women and children. Since Friday morning, and therefore over the weekend, a flood of people have crossed the border.

[English]

We must not lose the momentum prompted by the sudden mass movement of people back to Rwanda. Some have suggested that because the terror in which the Interhamwe militias held the refugees has now been broken, there is no need for international intervention. According to them the problem is solved; of course, we know that this is not the case.

Let us not forget that only four weeks ago all aid agencies had pulled their personnel out of Zaire. There was no help, no food and no medicine. Yes, we have all seen the thousands of people flooding across the border, but let us not forget the hundreds of thousands of victims still in Zaire. We need to find these people. We need to bring them food and water and to give them shelter. We also need to support their voluntary return to Rwanda. Over 60 per cent of the refugees are women and children. They need immediate relief.

[Translation]

It is vital that we continue to provide aid to the refugees. Their need for food and medicine is urgent as they leave transit camps to return to their communities. Once we have looked after these needs, we must help them resettle quickly and safely in their respective communities.

[English]

The situation is urgent and the needs are great. This is why the Prime Minister announced that the Canadian International Development Agency, for which I am responsible, is setting aside some \$15 million for new emergency humanitarian aid for the victims of the conflict, those coming back to Rwanda and of course those remaining in Zaire.

This morning I held a press conference to outline the details of the aid package. I was accompanied by representatives of the Canadian Red Cross and CARE Canada. With CIDA's support, these two organizations are mobilizing teams of highly skilled Canadians who will go to the region as soon as possible to bring much needed help. They are doctors, nurses, logistics experts and engineers. They will help fulfil the basic needs of the victims, particularly with respect to clean water and medical help.

Canadian NGOs have a long history and much experience in central Africa. They have faced danger to bring help to others. Their actions and commitments are a source of pride to all of us. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate them for all their work, past, present and future.

• (1640)

[Translation]

I would also like to draw your attention to the hard work done in Africa by the Red Cross and UN agencies such as the high commissioner for refugees and the world food program. The thousands of tonnes of food, medical and material aid collected in the region show how seriously they take their role. They are prepared to respond to the vital needs of over a million people. Canadian NGOs I have talked to on three occasions in recent days have expressed support for Canada's leadership in this humanitarian mission. In their view, deploying an international force is the only way emergency relief can be provided to vulnerable populations.

Since 1994, Canadian NGOs have joined forces with the Canadian International Development Agency to mitigate the effects of genocide. Our program in Rwanda is twofold. First, to provide humanitarian assistance to alleviate in the short term the suffering of the Rwandan population. This assistance will consist in providing medical care, shelters, a clean water supply, food, and means of transport through international organizations and Canadian NGOs. The critical situation of children has been the primary focus of

CIDA, which directed a large part of its humanitarian assistance to children.

Second, Canada wanted to help Rwanda find a long term solution. To this end, we support the work of the International Criminal Tribunal, as well as the establishment of a criminal justice system, the training of judges and the protection of human rights. At the same time, we are in favour of reuniting children with their families and communities. We have also provided assistance to the Rwandan women who, following the genocide, found themselves in charge of large families. We are helping them support themselves through housing, low-level credit financing and job creation projects.

[English]

Our efforts to deal with the long term effects of central Africa's conflicts cannot be limited to Rwanda. For this reason I am calling a high level meeting of the heads of national aid agencies and international aid organizations to help mobilize the donor community to ensure the safe and peaceful reintegration of returnees to their communities.

We must deal most urgently with the problems of Rwanda but we must also address the special needs of Zaire, Burundi and Tanzania. We need to work together as donors to help develop carefully measured responses to the situation in central Africa while we keep in mind the complexity of relationships among the region's governments, refugees and rebel groups.

This meeting will be held as soon as possible, hopefully as soon as this weekend. It is intended to mobilize international and bilateral donors to provide assistance to the region's repatriated refugees in a quick and co-operative fashion. It is not intended to replace the co-ordinating mechanisms that already exist on the ground but to reinforce them.

We want to reassure Rwandans as they return to their communes that they will have the support they need to reintegrate peacefully into their society. At the same time we must reassure current residents of Rwanda's villages that we support the needs of communities as a whole. Our goal needs to be to find a lasting solution to the problems of that region and to help the refugees in their plight in the immediate days ahead.

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I will be dividing my time with the member for Fraser Valley East.

I have lost track of the number of times in the last three decades that tribalism or ethnic nationalism, whatever we want to call it, has led to widespread violence and suffering on the African continent. This is one of the most unhappy legacies of colonialism on the continent when Africa was artificially divided up into

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countries in a way which had no bearing whatsoever upon their ethnic make-up. Within the borders of those colonies the colonizing powers practised the policy of divide and rule. Some tribes would be favoured to the detriment of others, thus accentuating pre-existing ethnic divisions.

• (1645)

The Belgians in Rwanda and Burundi were especially good at this. They set up an administration completely staffed by the minority Tutsi tribe and these people, in turn, lorded it over their Hutu majority and they have subsequently paid a very high price.

Most politicians in Africa publicly deplore tribalism but to consolidate their power almost all of them continue to pander to it. Civil services, armies and educational institutions have all been essentially staffed by members of whatever tribe happens to be ascendant in a given country at a given time.

It is said that the current Government of Rwanda is making an honest attempt to break this pattern in the interests of national reconciliation. We shall see.

In any event, the outside world will not settle the problems of Central Africa with a four to six month military mission. This mission may offer a bit of breathing space, but the underlying problems can be solved only by Africans themselves.

The Tutsis originally arrived in Central Africa in the 17th century, migrating in from somewhere in the area of Ethiopia. Nobody knows exactly where they came from. They subjugated the indigenous Hutus and they set up a feudal system with a Tutsi aristocracy. This arrangement was continued with, as I have said, the official sanction of the governments during the colonial era. It led to the first massacres in Rwanda, which actually took place in 1959, prior to the end of colonial rule. The Hutus rose up, overthrew their Tutsi masters and killed about 100,000 people. Nobody seems to remember this anymore.

Pogroms of the Tutsi minority continued until 1964, two years after independence. Hundreds of thousands of Tutsis fled the country, many of them into Uganda. All this was 30 years ago.

Taking a lesson from the events in Rwanda, the ruling Tutsi minority in neighbouring Burundi launched a pre-emptive strike against the Hutus. Any Hutu who was well educated, who had acquired any degree of wealth was summarily executed. About 200,000 people were killed in 1972.

The world, including Canada, yawned and looked the other way. The conscience of the world was finally aroused by the largest massacre of all, the slaughter of the Rwandan Tutsis in 1994, but nobody except the NGOs actually tried to do anything until the Tutsi rebellion in eastern Zaire brought violence to the refugee camps there.

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All of a sudden somebody dialled 911 and Canada, as usual, said "ready, aye ready". As the hon. member for Don Valley North has already stated, there is indeed a certain urgency to the present situation but surely it pales compared to the situation in 1994 and the one in Burundi in 1972 when the world just closed its eyes until the killing was nearly over.

I smell a very large political rat in the government's anxiety to get troops into Zaire and Rwanda right now. Sometimes governments do the right thing for opportunistic motives.

• (1650)

I support this humanitarian initiative but with grave misgivings. I do wonder how this government, having continued the 20 year process of eviscerating our armed forces, proposes to support three simultaneous peacekeeping efforts. This is a government which likes to have its cake while continuing to eat it in great gobs. It makes public brownie points by cutting the defence budget and then makes more points by calling on our undermanned, poorly equipped forces to polish the Prime Minister's image in Canada's perpetual role of policemen for the world.

We have these take note debates time after time. Sometimes I wonder why when the decisions have already been made. However, I guess we are on course. The Hercules are already landing in Kigali. I only hope that our troops are not going to be put to any large degree into harm's way in order to give a bit of political polish to the government across the way.

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester, land mines; the hon. member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, endangered species.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I do thank you for recognizing me and for the opportunity to speak for a few moments perhaps on a little different angle on this take note debate on the desperate situation in Rwanda and Zaire. I would just like to raise a few issues here in the time allotted to me.

Our common humanity or our love of humanity requires us in one way to go to Africa, whether we want to or not. We see the pictures and the problems and we want to help. That is a common Canadian response and it is something that on one level is to be respected.

However, our own safety and our own cognizance of the difficulties also requires us to be wise about the form that this assistance should take in this difficult area. I do not question the principle of helping nations and I do not question the need to help the helpless and especially the poorest of the poor and so on. They

are good phrases. They sound good over here where we are well fed, safe and warm. On the broader level I accept that.

However, I do have many questions about how we decide who to help and where we should go. Two years ago, in the wake of the holocaust in Rwanda, while sitting on the foreign affairs committee I called publicly for some sort of a rapid reaction force to make sure we had some capacity to respond in a more effective way; not a UN rapid reaction force but some sort of team in Canada so we could say "we need to send some help, we have the facilities and we have it in place".

I am pleased to see that this spring the government set up DART, the disaster assistance response team, which has improved our capacity to respond quickly to difficult situations.

In 1995 the House of Commons voted on my bill, the peacekeeping bill, in which I argued that Parliament should have the right to pass a resolution and have a debate such as this on each and every peacekeeping mission. My bill would not have stopped the Prime Minister from sending a reconnaissance team to the area in advance of any parliamentary approval, since the bill made allocations for a short term intervention such as this to take place without calling Parliament together just for that reason.

The resolution that I think should have come before the House would have laid out the parameters of the mission beforehand, the size, the cost and duration of the mission and the rules of engagement. The criteria for peacekeeping missions are important. For instance, on the rules of engagement, think back two short years ago. United Nations troops had to stand by and we all saw pictures of it on TV where they had to stand by and watch people being butchered with machetes because the terms of engagement were not to intervene.

• (1655)

I can think of nothing worse than to be told to stand back and not intervene when women and children are being slaughtered in front of you. That must have been a horrible thing for those troops. The question still arises for me. Will the same thing happen again?

There are problems too with the overall priorities of the government. I note that today in Bosnia NATO announced that it needs 30,000 troops to keep the peace in Bosnia. Our current commitment is 1,000 troops in Bosnia right now. I am not sure what the request will be of Canada in the days ahead. It may be more than 1,000. It may be 2,000 or maybe none. We are not sure because there is no organized overall effort to know where we should send our troops and where the priorities should be.

There are other peacekeeping missions ongoing at the moment. We are stretched thin in Bosnia, in Haiti, in the Golan, the Sinai, Mozambique, Angola and Cambodia. We are here, there and everywhere.

As for priorities there are other crises in the world as well. There are refugees from Afghanistan and Iraq. The problems in the entire Sudan are enormous. They are tragic and they are longstanding.

Why do we decide now to help Rwanda? Why is Rwanda and the crisis there, a crisis which appears to be thankfully abating somewhat, suddenly at the top of the list? I am not sure of the answer but I will let people read into it what they will.

I am here to make a case for a more orderly approach to important overseas commitments on behalf of Canada. On the weekend we saw the situation change drastically. The Rwandan government says it no longer wants help, it no longer wants the intervention of Canadians on its soil.

Of course, the job of feeding people and saving lives, giving medical assistance in the area continues to haunt us, so we want to participate. Again though, the question is do we participate best with troops. Is the \$100 million that it will cost us in troops allocation the best \$100 million or could it be best channelled through NGOs or other agencies? I hope those other options are still being investigated even at this late hour.

I would like to suggest a few principles by which we should conduct ourselves in Africa. This is where I would like to take a little different tact perhaps. The hon. member from Maple Creek went through some of the longstanding problems, but in the solutions to Africa the first principle should be that we need a long term solution. Four to six months is not going to fix anything in Africa, I do not believe. The solution must be long term.

All other problems pale in the shadow of the great problem that still exists in Africa. The genocide that occurred in Rwanda and which still threatens millions today in the sub-Saharan area is as a result of a much deeper problem. In a sense Africa is still the dark continent today when it comes to this deep problem of tribalism. In Rwanda, the crisis we are talking about today, one's loyalty is primarily to one's own tribe or ethnic group. The loyalty to the principles of truth, love, justice or any of the things that we have come to accept as due course in Canada, there is not that loyalty there.

I believe we cannot solve this problem in Rwanda with military force. After we go in with the guns, and after we go in with the protective unit of whatever kind, the moral problem will still exist. It will be the same thing all over again. It has been going on, as my hon. colleague mentioned, for 300 years. It bubbled up two years ago. It is still there. It will still be there two, three, four or five years down the road. Perhaps two months after we leave it will still be there unless the people in Rwanda have a change of heart. It is deeper than a military problem. It is actually a moral problem.

I do not want to pick exclusively on the Rwandans but they need more than just military intervention. They need a change of heart and a change of mind.

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If it is a military mission alone that we are embarking on, military intervention alone is doomed to failure. So why should Canada be involved at all? We are involved because of our own commitment to those principles that I mentioned earlier.

• (1700)

Our belief in the principles of justice, of love, of esteeming your neighbour as yourself are principles that we gloss over in the House. We take it for granted that tonight when we go home we give vehicles that have the right of way the right of way. We hold the door for others. We understand that someone's home is to be respected and we do not intrude. We understand that someone's choice for an occupation or political party to belong to are choices that we respect.

We have a need to be involved because we take those principles without forcing any cultural principles, any cultural nuances on the Rwanda people. We need to try to somehow impart to them the need for these principles of love, justice, understanding and esteeming your neighbour as yourself. You do not have to get into the religious side of that to know that is the principle on which democracy rides. If we do not impart that somehow in our journeys in Rwanda, it will not be a lasting peace and we will be back. It will be another tragedy.

The second principle is to find a solution that involves justice in the whole sub-Saharan part of Africa. The renewal strategy in Rwanda must reflect Canada's own commitment to justice. If there is ever to be lasting peace in Rwanda, or Zaire, or the Sudan or any area that is undergoing these tragic ethnic wars, the world community must one day come to grips with the idea that there are murderers in Rwanda, there are people who practice genocide and ethnic cleansing and one day they must be brought to justice.

It is not enough just to feed people in a camp or even when they return to their villages. One day justice must be served and it must be seen to be served. To this day we are still trying to bring justice to those people who were involved in the holocaust. Fifty years after the war, we understand it is so important that justice be served and be seen to be served that if a murderer or someone involved in genocide is found, we as an international community and as a nation do not tolerate it.

If this short term intervention in Rwanda is just that and no justice is served then I fear in two, three, four or ten years from now it will erupt again in another holocaust. That is why justice must be served.

Over the last couple of years no one wanted to get involved. The groups who are involved in the refugee camps are known. It is known that they use the refugees as shelter and as a human shield. We all know it is happening. I am not saying it is an easy solution but unless justice is done one day that cancer will come back and

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there will be another holocaust. You can count on it and 300 years of history show that to be true.

The third principle is that although we are there and the world is going there in some pretty good healthy numbers, well armed men and women are going to go over to Africa to help deliver aid. It must be a made in Africa solution to this made in Africa problem. The four to six month intervention is to give breathing room. That is a good idea. It has some value. Obviously we cannot allow another holocaust so we are trying to do our bit. However, in the long run it has to be a made in Africa solution.

In some ways I fear that we still have a bit of "this is the white man's burden" in Africa attitude. We are going over there and teach these guys how to do it. In the long term it will not work. We have to do more than that.

I think of the example of South Africa. I heard an interesting speaker a couple of weeks ago and I believe, Mr. Speaker, you did as well, talk about some of the principles that brought about the peaceful change from apartheid to a democratic, one person, one vote rule in South Africa.

• (1705)

The national committee for reconciliation was formed. That is a South African phrase which means that we have to come together and find a solution together because we have to live together. An all-party committee came together to write a new constitution. All parties, all ethnics, all colours, all groups came together to solve the problems in South Africa.

If I could encourage one last thing it would be a just and peaceful Rwanda. It would be a society where all ethnicities, all races are accepted in peaceful co-existence. But that must come from the Rwandan people themselves. While we are there I hope we work to bring about a national reconciliation or whatever name they want to call it so they too can experience what South Africa has, which is a modern day miracle. It is a peaceful solution to a seemingly impossible situation.

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Rosedale.

I am honoured to speak in this special parliamentary debate on the Zaire mission, and Canada's strong guidance and direction at the United Nations through the compassionate leadership of the Prime Minister. Along with other members of Parliament, I support our efforts 100 per cent and I am pleased that the foreign affairs minister and the Minister of National Defence with the cabinet are leading the way.

I quote from the a November 14 Chatham *Daily News* editorial: "Canada's willingness to come to the aid of starving refugees in

Zaire once again demonstrates the outstanding leadership our nation enjoys in international affairs".

While the rest of the world responded slowly to the crisis, Canada took a moral leadership role in generating international military support for the refugees. By authorizing a mission to send as many as 1,600 Canadian troops into what even United Nations' officials have called a no man's land, Canada is spearheading this multinational effort.

As members will agree, this is no exercise in public relations. In addition to the formidable geographical problems, the interior of Africa is quite possibly the most politically unstable place on earth.

Canada has a long and distinguished history as the world's foremost peacekeeper. If our troops are effective in Zaire, it will restore some of that respect we remembered and honoured during last week's Remembrance Day ceremonies across the country. We must remember this mission is different from most of Canada's previous peacekeeping operations. Our soldiers' job will be ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid.

There still remain more than 600,000 Hutu refugees in Zaire and another 700,000 in Tanzania. I am pleased that the government is identifying this as a humanitarian crisis, as it puts its hopes into deeds. We cannot remain comfortable in the face of hunger and injustice. I am proud of Canada's leading role in peacekeeping and the fact that Chatham and Kent county in southwestern Ontario, the real bread basket of our nation, are leading the way in this humanitarian mission.

As Heather Bondy told me, maybe the only way we can come close to understanding the suffering is to actively hope, then put our hope into action and actually do something. Heather has been involved in nearly a dozen third world projects, for example, building bridges in the Dominican Republic and she started the first food bank in the city of Chatham.

More than 22 tonnes of food has been committed to the effort in Chatham. Eight area nurses and doctors are getting immunized in preparation for the work overseas. Those donations are in addition to 10 tonnes of wheat committed last week by W.G. Thompson & Sons of Blenheim, one of the largest grain facilities in Canada. It will be milled into flour by Dover Flour Mills of Chatham. The company will donate soybean meal that can be mixed with canola oil to make a protein rich nutritious meal. The canola oil has already been donated by western Canada.

• (1710)

Among other gifts committed to the group from Kent are enormous beer tent style canopies that can serve as a shelter for a medical mission; a tentative promise of enough grain to fill several rail cars; small farm implements and seeds for planting quick harvest grain; medical supplies from the Chatham hospitals and

medical community and suitcase sized water purifiers from the MIOX Corporation of New Mexico.

The Prime Minister's announcement yesterday about sending Lieutenant-General Maurice Baril to Kigali is welcomed news indeed. The \$15 million in emergency aid to the refugees will also help. The humanitarian aid financed by the Canadian International Development Agency includes support for Canadian doctors, nurses, water sanitation engineers and logistic experts organized by the Canadian Red Cross, CARE Canada and Canadian Lutheran World Relief. Canadian aid channelled through these and other agencies as well as the United Nations will help immensely.

The Kent county group is hoping for a plane to carry its equipment and supplies to Zaire. The Chatham airport has been approved for landing by the city officials. Ten local citizens are waiting to hear from the military on the ground and are ready to move in as part of the national humanitarian effort.

I have contacted the Minister of National Defence and his parliamentary secretary to inquire about the availability of a plane for the huge number of items destined for Africa.

Those involved with the group in my riding include Dr. Eric Williams of Lethbridge, Alberta who has lived in Tanzania for many years and speaks several languages; nurse Candice Barlow, currently the AIDS spokesperson for Kent county and head of the public health department; nurse Kathy Van Basler a medical-surgical nurse who has lived in the Middle East for several years; nurse Joanne Gamble, wife of Dr. Brian Gamble, chief of staff at the Chatham-Kent Health Alliance; health care worker John Canna, a former U.S. marine; Marie-France Wilkinson, a French teacher for 25 years. Her talents are crucial in this francophone area.

Also involved is Steve Bradley, president and general manager of the Best Western Wheel's Inn, who has been a board member of the Chatham Food Bank and brings a farming background to help in the sowing of seeds; Andy Morrissey, writer/reporter for the Chatham *Daily News*. He has been asked to be the Canadian correspondent and is young and willing to do what is needed to help; Father Matthew George of Our Lady of Help Christian Church in Wallaceburg. The priest has been collecting donations of money and goods through the London Catholic Diocese. Since Zaire and Rwanda are 90 per cent Catholic, he will offer much hope to the people he will meet.

As well, Barry Fraser, the Kent county representative for the Ontario ministry of agriculture has researched what seeds will be appropriate in the troubled region.

Right now in Chatham a local businessman has donated the use of an empty store for people to drop off donated items. A church in Windsor has put the local group on the Internet so that they can quickly access what information and items will be further needed.

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I hope that a plane can land in Chatham to transport these caring people and their supplies to help the multinational mission. We know that more than one million refugees, of whom 60 per cent are women and children, have been caught between warring parties.

Starting last week, large numbers have been crossing the boarder from Zaire into Rwanda and urgently need food, medicine and shelter. I support and applaud the efforts of my constituents and those of all Canadians in this effort. Heather Bondy and I agree that as Canadians we are a people that believe life is either a daring adventure of hope or it is nothing.

● (1715)

I strongly urge the Minister of National Defence and military officials to work with the Kent County group to transport supplies to the war torn region. They are ready. They are working hard. They care.

Donations from churches, business and area residents have been pouring in from the city of Chatham, as well as Sarnia, London, Watforth, Petrolia and other areas. People are responding to the terrible ordeal being experienced by the people in Zaire.

In conclusion, my constituents and I salute Heather Bondy and her team for bringing this humanitarian effort together in my riding. I also salute our troops and their leaders, who will help to stabilize the ground so that aid efforts can begin successfully. I also praise the work of our Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of National Defence, indeed the cabinet and our caucus for leading the way in the world once again. Together we can make it happen.

Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to support the government's initiative to enter into the Rwanda crisis and the Zaire crisis in such a positive and constructive manner.

We heard the Prime Minister's statement in the House today. From that we clearly understood the background to the taking of this initiative. We also understood that this initiative is being taken in circumstances of the utmost responsibility and of the utmost gravity, both with respect to the nature of the situation and the remedies that are being called upon to address it.

We are told that this will be a multilateral force commanded by Canadians. We are told that it is supported by a United Nations resolution. We are told that it falls under article 7 of the United Nations charter, which gives the largest possible mandate to those forces intervening in Rwanda to act in a way which will ensure the success of their mission.

We are told that there are clear rules of engagement and clear rules of command. Even the Americans, who are often hesitant to be involved in this type of situation, have accepted that this is the

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type of situation in which they must participate, and participate in collaboration with our Canadian forces.

We are told that there will be no action without the security of understanding the reaction of the countries involved on the ground.

It seems to me, therefore, when we consider the situation in the House today that the questions we must ask ourselves are is it in Canada's interest to undertake this mission? Has the changed situation on the ground made the whole idea irrelevant? Do we have the resources, both human and materiel, to accomplish this undertaking?

In speaking of Canada's interest, or our interest in Canadians undertaking this mission, I first would like to dwell on the Prime Minister's comments about the humanitarian background for this mission. It seems to me that we, as Canadians, who are fortunate enough to live in this country, recognize the nature of the interdependent world in which we live. We owe it to ourselves to recognize the need to act in circumstances which require a humanitarian response to tragedies of the magnitude and of the type which we are facing.

I can remember some time ago in my riding of Rosedale speaking to some young Rwandan refugees who had come to Canada. They were living in Montreal but they had come down to speak to some disadvantaged youths in Rosedale. We were working together on a common project. We had young people working together under a group called the Environmental Video Exchange. These youths were putting together a very interesting international community response to a lot of our international problems. The interaction of these youth from Rwanda with our own young men and women in Rosedale was very instructive. It was very clear from talking to them that if they were here in the House today they would be reacting much like the majority of the members of the House. That is to say, they would be supporting the government in this initiative.

Canadians at every level, in every walk of life, I believe sincerely want to be of constructive help in circumstances where they are able to do so.

• (1720)

I strongly believe, from having listened to the Prime Minister today and the minister's statements and having had an opportunity to review with some of the officials the circumstances of this mission, that this is an appropriate time to do exactly what the immediate initial response of the Canadians would be, which would be to stand up and say "let us take this, let us run with it and let us make it count in the world".

I listened with great pride to what the Prime Minister said about the reaction of the international community and the reaction he received from around the world, from small nations, great nations and the United Nations.

I had the opportunity to travel to Europe last week with a group of other members of Parliament from all parties. We happened to be in Germany and had breakfast with a group of German parliamentarians, members of their defence committee. They told us: "Do you know what our television is telling us here in Germany? Canada is doing what we in Europe should be doing. Canada is taking the lead in a way that we should be taking the lead and are not able to take the lead". Perhaps it is for the reason the Prime Minister mentioned in his speech that there were problems with the Europeans because of a colonial past or otherwise.

However, the fact of the matter is people in other countries are seeing that this country is willing to take the lead in a humanitarian response but also in another manner that is very important to us in terms of our vital strategic interest in this country. We are taking a lead in supporting and reinforcing the effectiveness of the United Nations as an instrument to ensure that problems like this cannot develop in the future.

We have often debated both in the foreign affairs committee and in the defence committee the need for this country to be a strong supporter of the United Nations system not just because of a humanitarian interest but because of the vital interest of ourselves as Canadians to have a strong, international, multilateral capacity to respond to problems of this nature. Unfortunately they are not becoming less frequent in the world but in today's world for reasons which relate to the end of the cold war and shifting alliances and, in some ways, to the insecurity that is building in various parts of the world they risk becoming more frequent.

The need for a strong multilateral United Nations system which can respond to this type of situation is more important than ever before. What this initiative by the government is doing today is strengthening that system and sending a signal to the world that yes, the UN can work, yes there are countries that are willing to work within the UN system and make it work. That is a very important matter in the interests of all Canadians. I think we have to recognize the need for that.

I would like to point out that in so doing we are addressing the problems of a changing situation. We recognize that this situation is changing but it is very clear from the consultations with our authorities that General Baril will be able to deal with that and recognize that this is a new situation that has to be addressed hour by hour, but that it is not the time now, merely because there is a change in the situation, to back down.

When we are considering this matter in the House as members of Parliament, we obviously have to take the responsibility of asking whether we have the resources to enable us to do the job. As members of Parliament, we have consulted and have been informed by officials of the defence department and the foreign affairs department that we do have the necessary resources and that this is not some mission that we are undertaking in any irresponsible manner. On the contrary, it is something which we have the

capacity to do, the ability to deliver and we will ensure that we are able to do the job.

Those are the conditions which, united, make me believe that it is important for us to participate in this mission.

[*Translation*]

In conclusion, I would like to say something which has no direct impact on this mission but which, I believe, has to do with its importance. This is the third time we are debating the idea of a similar mission in this House. We have troops in Bosnia, we have troops in Haiti, and now we will have troops in Rwanda. Why are we there?

The Prime Minister referred to the reason in his speech before the House this afternoon. One of the reasons we are there is that we are a bilingual country.

We are a country of diversity with a tradition of tolerance, with a tradition in the world which, based on our own Canadian experience, makes ours a country particularly suited to undertaking this kind of mission.

• (1725)

I think that we can be proud, as members of Parliament, of the fact that our government has decided to undertake this mission. I think that we can be proud, as Canadian citizens, of the fact that our society allows us to undertake such a mission.

In conclusion, I think that, when the history of the development of international co-operation is told, this mission will be an example of the beginning of new form of international co-operation, and Canada will be the country that will have set the example of this new form of co-operation.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member for Rosedale a question after this brief commentary.

He indicates he would support UN participation and he supports this peacekeeping mission to Zaire. I commend him for that and I have no problem with that. My question is related to the armed forces we have, the role they play and how it just seems to be always a shifting and moving target. It is almost like how the finance minister talks about his deficit elimination tactics.

If we are to support peacekeeping efforts, if we are to support a military, why did the Liberal government, of which he is a member, reduce the defence budget and continue to support peacekeeping missions around the world? As my colleague from Red Deer said in the first speech on this issue today, every foreign affairs minister in the House of Commons says this is for a set period of time and we will have that problem solved. Why was the budget cut? What criterion does the member from Rosedale feel the government

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should set out for itself to define the role of this humanitarian mission? Under what terms and conditions will this member then feel it has been a success or a failure? If we do not know as members of Parliament what the terms are, how do we know if it is a success or not?

Mr. Graham: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question and I would like to go back to the point that the hon. member for Red Deer often makes about the requirement for a set period of time for these missions. I have heard the member refer to that in our committee and I respect the member's opinion on these issues a great deal.

The hon. member also made a very valid point in saying these are shifting times. One of the things you have to have in these circumstances is a certain amount of flexibility, as we have seen in the United States. In Bosnia we set a time for a certain period of time and we are willing to stay for another year. One does not say we are willing to stay for a longer period of time because the mission is a total failure. One is staying because the mission is a success and it is important that we give the flexibility to be able to stay.

I think where this mission will be different from other missions is that there will be a clear ability to say when this mission has been successful when in fact the majority of the population has been able to move out of Zaire back into Rwanda, and in circumstances where it can be settled in Rwanda and the militia in Zaire is not able to harass the population or prevent it from returning to its homes. That is a very much more settled form of a framework it seems to me of a problem, and one which can reasonably be dealt with in a short period of time than the much more complicated case of re-establishing a civil society in a country like the former Yugoslavia. But that is not to say that the establishment of a civil society in Rwanda will not be an important issue for ensuring that this type of situation does not repeat itself in the future.

In that area I would suggest that there is where we again as Canadians have very responsible programs in place. We have the Canadian International Development Agency. One of the things we are doing in Rwanda is financing a reinvigoration of its justice system. We are trying to give its people and help them develop themselves the basis of a civil society. It is clearly not something which we can do for them. That would be another form of new colonialism. It is something that we have to enable them to do through help in education, by providing to them judicial instruction and other instruments that Canadian society values and enabling them to choose for themselves and apply it. I personally am not one of those who believes that after the end of this mission there will be the possibility of an eruption of civil violence in the communities of Rwanda. There is a civil authority in Rwanda. It needs beefing up. It can be made better and we can help them in doing that.

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• (1730)

That will not require troops. That will not require the continuation of this mission. It will require continued Canadian aid. I am glad to hear from the government that it intends to do that.

Third, let me say that the member points out the reduction in the defence budget. I will not dwell long on the seeming inconsistency in his position on this, given the fact that his party has strongly advocated greater reductions in government expenditures.

It is true we have had to reduce the defence budget. We have reduced the aid budget. We have reduced the budgets of every department in the country. I believe we are reducing them responsibly. We have reduced them in a way that enables our military to come to us and say: "Yes, we can do this mission. Yes, we have the capacity to do it properly". That is why I am willing to support it today.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to tell you first that I will share my time with the member for Verchères. It is a pleasure for me to take part in this debate on the deployment of a UN multinational force. As my colleagues who spoke before me told the House, the Bloc Québécois supports and welcomes this Canadian initiative.

My colleague from Rosedale told us that it is the third or fourth time we hold such a debate. Every time there is a debate about sending Canadian troops to hot spots, we are always confronted to the same question: Are Canadians and Quebecers in favour of sending these Canadian troops abroad?

In our ridings, opinions are divided. Some people are radically opposed, most often for financial reasons, while others strongly defend the idea, usually on humanitarian grounds.

In the February 1995 budget, the Canadian government cut all subsidies to non-governmental organizations specifically set up to show Canadians and Quebecers how important international co-operation is. I think that, in doing so, the government has made things much harder to understand. People see that the government is making decisions it should explain, but that it has stopped providing information.

I think it is essential that Canada be present in these disaster areas, for they are indeed disaster areas. Everybody agrees that the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the USSR have changed the world. It is one thing to recognize that the world has changed, but it is another to realize that the notion of security contains elements we had been previously unaware of.

Nowadays, when we talk about security, our security, the security of Quebecers and Canadians, is at stake every time some disaster occurs. I will list a few, such as population migrations caused by all kinds of situations.

• (1735)

It is estimated that 50 million men, women and children are displaced, have left their home, their homeland, their town or city due to tensions, wars, etc.

At the recent FAO summit on food, it was said that 800 million people are undernourished. The summit made the long term commitment of reducing world hunger by half within 20 years.

Underdevelopment, ethnic wars, overpopulation are issues of concern to us. Is the planet going to be able to sustain continuing demographic growth? I say that all these issues concern us because now and again our constituents ask us: "Do you not think that too many immigrants and refugees are allowed into Canada?"

If we refuse to do something about these problems, if Canada does not intervene in disaster areas, Canadians and Quebecers will not be able to use the same logic and say: "We should not let refugees in". Refugees are the immediate product of these events and we are all concerned.

We are so concerned that increasingly, within the international community, it is recognized that ethnic wars, civil wars within a country's boundaries, give rise to an obligation to interfere. Ten or fifteen years ago, this would have been unthinkable. Now international law is starting to say that whenever there are civil wars where the most fundamental rights of people are denied, it is the duty, not only the right, but the duty of the international community to take action.

Let us go back to the situation in Rwanda. How did the international community address this problem? As early as 1992 or 1993, following some missions in the great lakes region, the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, based in Montreal, had warned the secretary general of the United Nations that something was brewing that had all the characteristics of a genocide.

The international community did nothing. It waited for the crisis to explode in 1994. What happened of course is that between 500,000 and 1,000,000 people were killed. Naturally, what followed was the exodus of refugees, and bordering countries, like Zaire and Burundi, suffered the consequences.

Two years after the end of the genocide, we now realize that the international community was not very active in implementing solutions. The refugee situation in Zaire had to become explosive before the international community started to wonder if it should

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act, and I want to commend the Canadian initiative, which finally stirred the international community to action.

However, we are always putting out fires. Instead of preventing, instead of making sure the developing countries get out of their underdevelopment, instead of investing in durable human development, education, health, democratisation, democratic governments, human rights and civilian societies, the international community continues to invest billions of dollars in defense budgets and merely tosses crumbs to help developing countries.

• (1740)

Let us take Canada, for example, because it is the same as in the other countries. Canada allocates about \$2 billion to its official development assistance and a budget of about \$10 billion to defence, as if nothing had happened in the early 1990s, as if the concept of security had remained the same and was only related to a military aspect.

So, the international community must get out of its torpor. Permanent mechanisms must be put in place, not to impose peace, but to ensure that, in countries where these tensions exist, people can gradually regain hope and can develop in a framework that respects them. At that time, we will stop putting out fires, because we will have put a stop, perhaps, to underdevelopment.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, since this aspect will not be covered in any great depth in my speech, allow me to commend the expertise of my hon. colleague from Louis-Hébert in international affairs.

I completely agree with the last part of his remarks, which I caught and which dealt with prevention. The image was quite forceful. When \$2 billion is spent on international assistance, while national defence is funded to the tune of \$10 billion, this clearly indicates that, in this area as in many others, a more curative than preventive approach is being favoured. In the end, the cost is higher, and, in this case, we are not talking about money, but human lives.

I would like to say a few words about this multinational force Canada will be leading and which will be deployed. In Zaire, it has already started providing assistance to refugees, many of whom are now returning to Rwanda, which is a major development that has taken place since the creation of a multinational force was announced.

The Bloc's position, as stated earlier by our leader, is clear: We support this mission designed to allow refugees to safely return from Zaire and ensure that assistance will be provided to these people. Over the weekend, some very poignant images were broadcast. Some I saw myself, but one in particular was described to me; I did not actually see it. Just imagining the scene makes us realize how terrible a tragedy this is. Following an attack, a portion

of the slaughter was shown, and there was this little child looking around him, but all he could see was dead bodies. There were not many people on hand to provide assistance to the child, who was apparently rescued later. Such pictures cannot leave us indifferent.

At some point, someone had to take the initiative so that something could be done in Zaire, because everyone was leaving it up to the others. Everyone was waiting for everyone, including France and the United States. No intervention was being made and we were faced with a situation that could still get worse, because even the presence of a multinational force will not eliminate the causes of the conflict. Far from it. This is a potentially explosive situation and there could be a great deal of damage.

One only needs to remember what happened in Rwanda not too long ago to realize that the situation is very complex and is far from being resolved as regards the cohabitation of the Tutsis and Hutus.

So, we congratulate Canada for taking the initiative regarding this issue by getting together a multinational force and sending it with a UN supported mandate. Of course, some adjustment will have to be made. It will be made on Thursday, at an important meeting, because the population that was living further north in Zaire is now in motion. It is believed that 400,000 Hutus are already back in Rwanda and that another 100,000 will have made it to that country over the next few hours.

• (1745)

However, according to estimates made by NGO observers over there, some 700,000 refugees are still scattered, including more than 100,000 who are headed to western Zaire, who may have to quickly go to Rwanda. These people often find themselves in zones that are much less safe. A humanitarian corridor will have to be provided for them also. The mandate provides for the creation of a safety corridor for these people, and for bringing them the basics, such as food and medication.

In spite of the fact that 500,000 people are about to go back to Rwanda, the mandate remains. The intervention is still justified. Even though it is difficult to negotiate with the authorities of Zaire and Rwanda, as it is always complex, there will nevertheless be observers on the ground, especially NGOs that are there to help the people who still need help. Those observers know how to deal with the real situation and can make very specific observations.

Of course, there will be complex things to settle to ensure rapid intervention. In spite of Canada's commitment to send a force, there are still a few obstacles to overcome that will need to be dealt with at an important meeting on Thursday.

Whereas we can deplore somewhat how slow the process is, things do not always move as fast as we would like them to in this kind of intervention. A further step has already been made at least, since observers are already on site. More specifically, General

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Baril is there with a team that will grow in the days and weeks to come.

There is no ambiguity about our support. It is there, even though we, as well as the government, might have questions on the duration of the operations. There is some question about a more permanent solution, because obviously nobody expects the political problem there to be settled in four months. We know that we are getting involved in a very complex mission that might certainly last longer than the four months contemplated. The United Nations could then take over. We will see.

Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali has already stated that there will be a report. It has been agreed that a report will be submitted in early January. We will see what comes out of it.

I want to mention it, because it deals with a question often asked by some of our constituents. True, this type of mission costs money. However, as citizens of a relatively rich country, living in a very different context, we have the duty to show solidarity with the people who are living in utterly unacceptable conditions and facing a human drama which is really out of the ordinary, compared to what we see in our everyday lives.

The \$100 million contribution that was mentioned comes to a mere \$4 a year per capita. On a daily basis, it does not represent such a huge contribution, such a huge sacrifice to make in order to help those people and to take part in this operation, which will hopefully, because of the troops we are sending over there, make for an international perspective a lot closer to the real situation.

I think everybody, including the Government of Canada, wishes for an international conference on the situation in the great lakes region of Africa. Such a conference could be another step in the right direction. Meanwhile, in the short term, there are some needs to be met, especially in terms of humanitarian aid. Safe corridors have to be established for the people returning back home.

There is one more thing I want to mention. I want to salute our people and our soldiers sent over there. When people enlist in the armed forces, they expect one day to be called to take part in such a mission. Today, in the case of Canada, it is well known that when you enlist in the armed forces, you will probably take part in peacekeeping missions because, to our great fortune, we are not directly involved in domestic or foreign conflicts.

• (1750)

This means that our interventions are primarily civilian in nature or part of UN operations or other types of intervention by a multinational force led by Canada. We pay tribute to those who take part in such missions. It will be difficult for them and for their families, but such is reality. This is a choice they have made.

We pay tribute to their courage and hope that this operation will allow the Canadian armed forces to restore their reputation, which was tarnished by events, however isolated, in Somalia. I think that this will be an opportunity to point up the fact that the very great majority of our soldiers are doing extraordinary work and that they are deserving of greater attention.

This will provide an opportunity to realize that they are making a contribution that they will remember all their lives, just as those they help will remember it. We support them and we wish them the best of luck.

I repeat that we support this mission. Certain questions have been raised by colleagues during debate, but I do not think that this level of detail is appropriate when operations on this scale are involved. We wish our troops the best of luck and we hope that the government will keep us informed of developments, should there be any change of mandate. I am certain that the ministers involved and the government will do so.

[English]

Mr. John O'Reilly (Victoria—Haliburton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Ottawa West.

I want to speak in favour of the mission to Rwanda, Zaire and the rest of central Africa. The world is watching the situation on the African continent. In the last number of days over 400,000 refugees have crossed back into Rwanda in the Goma area. In the next few days over 150,000 will return to Rwanda.

Fighting, starvation, dehydration and disease are running rampant. The situation must be addressed. Canada has taken the position that it must step forward to help in a humanitarian fashion. Our history in peacekeeping puts us in a good position to be the leader, with the world showing its confidence in Canada to lead the way.

We must remember what this mission encompasses. As the Prime Minister indicated earlier, the enemies are suffering, pain, disease and hunger. We need to offer aid.

The sub-Saharan region is in great need of help on a long term basis. There are some non-government agencies in my riding of Victoria—Haliburton similar to a small group of Christians who run HAVE, which stands for Help A Village Effort, that operate out of the county of Haliburton.

This group sends money and people every year to help people to obtain clean water by drilling wells. They supply clean drinking water and all that goes with it: sanitation, hygiene, nutrition and a different way of life. They teach how to treat sickness and how to avoid disease. They teach people to read the instructions on a simple water pump. This is a major problem in an area with little or no educational system. These people will continue to try to help in the sub-Saharan region.

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I had the honour to attend a conference in 1996 in Washington. It was called "A 2020 Vision for Food, Agriculture, and the Environment". The major sponsor was the National Geographic Society. This conference, ironically enough, pinpointed the exact problem we are dealing with today.

The most successful missions to the sub-Sahara are small and include, first, a banking system that lends small amounts to farmers in Africa. The majority are women by the way. They have a huge success rate, with a 99 per cent payback record.

Second is a seed program for farmers, with training by the Canadian agricultural community, to help the African communities obtain knowledge in modern agricultural techniques.

Third is programs in education on basic reading for instructions in order to read labels and symbols, or language training for sanitation and attending to basic human needs.

• (1755)

We must take this opportunity to step in and lead the way. The world is not only watching with hope, it is counting on Canada to show the United Nations' countries that our intervention is for the long term building of a self-sustaining country in Africa.

There are many reasons to send aid to the sub-Sahara. There is only one, fear of the unknown, that holds other people back. Some countries, because of their colonial history, are unable to help. Canada is able to help.

In conclusion, I wish to offer my support to this mission and hope it is the first step in helping the sub-Sahara and all of Africa to become self-sustaining.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I know why the hon. member supports this mission and I accept that. However, I would like to know how it is that our peacekeeping forces can be sent all around the world, ad infinitum, without a finite end to these efforts? I am talking about the bigger picture.

I suggest that our troops are only able, by their own admission, to take on two peacekeeping ventures at a time. This is a third one. They have two other commitments in Haiti and Bosnia. Are we not stretching these troops out too much? Are we not imposing a greater burden on them than we should be? How sensitive are we to their needs? We were told by the military that it only has the capacity, the money, the troops and the equipment to handle two peacekeeping missions at a time.

How does the member balance the military's admission of that fact with his support for this humanitarian effort? It will have to be measured on what criterion we think is just to make sure that the refugees are safe, have food and the basic necessities and that the rebels will not fire on them? How does the member rationalize us

supporting this in light of the fact that our troops are being stretched to the limit right now?

Mr. O'Reilly: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Calgary Centre on his intervention. He has allowed me to speak a little longer about the strength that I have and feel as a member of the defence committee. I know that the Canadian troops are the best trained in the world, have the best attitude and have the highest degree of commitment to anything that they are assigned to do.

I believe our troops can handle this as they have handled other missions and as they continue to handle missions in places like Haiti, an area where bilingualism is a great asset. Our peacekeepers are well trained and well equipped. They are able to handle the missions that they are assigned. They handle them with the honour and dignity that comes with the strong history of the Canadian peacekeeping force.

The Canadian peacekeeping forces are known worldwide for their generosity, their support and their humanitarian ways. I think they will continue to do that. I would like to think that there is money in the defence budget to be able to handle that. I put my trust in the minister of defence that we have the capacity to do that. I put my confidence in the fact that the military has indicated to me that it is able to handle this mission. It has the money, the resources, the know-how and the ability. It is very anxious to treat this problem where it is. It does not want to let it spread to other areas.

The members of the armed forces do not want only to be peacekeepers, they want to teach people how to live a better life and how to sustain themselves for the long term. That in kind helps Canada sustain itself by not having these people on the shores of other nations in boat loads and so forth. I think that is very important. I believe our peacekeepers are able to handle this and that there is a budget available or we would not be sending them.

However, it is necessary, even if we have to scrape and scrounge somewhere, to ensure that this mission is carried out to the betterment of the whole world.

• (1800)

Mr. Silye: Madam Speaker, I would like to pursue this a little further. We were told when troops were sent to Haiti that they would be there for six months. An extension would be asked for.

We do not know how long the troops are going on this humanitarian effort. So when I say ad infinitum, I want to know why parliamentarians are not given more information and why the government or the minister of defence does not establish what our role is in terms of the military and defence. Are we peacekeepers or are we more than that? Let us tool ourselves up for that.

It is very frustrating in my opinion to see us committing and stretching ourselves out and not really getting the recognition and

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the credit that we could still be getting even though we do have the best troops in Canada.

How long will this be for now? Why are the troops not out of Haiti?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): The hon. member has 30 seconds.

Mr. O'Reilly: Madam Speaker, I obviously cannot answer the question in 30 seconds because I would have to go into such detail. No one plans a war. No one plans to have 400,000 people cross a border in one day. Nobody plans on training people and how long that will take. That is something we react to.

I am sure the member for Calgary Centre was very supportive of our rapid deployment capabilities, as he supports this mission which he has indicated. He knows that no conflict can have a time limit. It depends on the need of the people at the time.

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is with some trepidation that I rise to speak on this motion. No matter how many times we are confronted with the armed conflicts of the world, the decision to send Canadian forces into the dangers of civil strife is a most difficult one to make.

Many Canadians are rightfully concerned about the risks of peacekeeping in this particular situation. But I believe that as Canadians we must remember how fortunate we are to live in the country we do, that the majority of citizens of this planet are not so fortunate. The decisions we make today affect our constituents, our fellow Canadians as well as people beyond our borders around the world.

The age old question is am I my brother's keeper? I am very proud of my country, that we have decided yes we are. Globalization is much more than a question of using the resources of developing countries, the poorest areas of the world, and seeing them as customers for our trade.

Globalization also recognizes that the deprivation of the majority of the world's population is not only their problem but our problem. Causes of strife like starvation, lack of basic health care, lack of the ability to grow, produce, consume and distribute your own food are problems for the entire world and not only for the people who suffer from them.

We know that around the world at any time there are a million people who want to come to Canada. One of our biggest obligations in the world is to help make it possible for people to live safely with some basic standard of living in their own country as well.

The question we are debating today goes to the very heart of whether a country like Canada, which has been chosen several times by the United Nations as the best country in the world in

which to live, should have set an example for the world to follow or should have turned its back.

As in the past, we have to decide whether to act to stop the suffering in the great lakes region of Africa or to ignore the cry for help. I am immensely proud that we decided not to walk away and that our Prime Minister and our government recognized the unique leadership role that Canada could play in this. I am extremely proud that we played that role very well. Generations of Canadians have worked to build in this part of the world a prosperous and just society based on fundamental democratic principles. We also have built a reputation as being one of the foremost promoters of these values around the world. And the way that we have responded to this crisis I believe has sent a clear message to the world about the kind of country Canada is and why we are looked up to as an example of a responsible international country.

• (1805)

[*Translation*]

In so doing, we will be showing the refugees in the great lakes region of Africa that we are concerned about what happens to them. We will reaffirm Canada's lead role as an intermediary, and will be maintaining our country's reputation as a negotiator and peacemaker.

Given the region's history, clear and prompt action by the international community is necessary, if we are to avoid the situation in the great lakes deteriorating into a repeat of the bloody massacres in Rwanda two years ago.

[*English*]

In recent years Canada has called on the international community to work together to deploy peacekeeping forces more rapidly. A couple of weeks ago the Minister of Foreign Affairs spoke of the need for increased peace building and reconciliation in the relations between countries.

Canada's leading an active role in this mission will ensure that the plea for help from the displaced people of this region will not go unanswered.

Our involvement will open critical lifelines of food and medicine to the refugees and the injured civilians. It will help people return to their homes and settle in some measure of safety and security.

Our mission is clear. It is to ensure that much needed aid reaches the afflicted civilians of the region and to provide safe passage to those refugees returning to their communities.

In taking the leadership in both the establishment and the mandate of the multinational troops, Canada will once again set an example to the world that as a nation we will not shirk from our duty in this world. We will help restore peace to a region that has suffered for too long and we will continue to fight for the dignity and safety of the less fortunate citizens of our world.

This is an evolving situation. None of us can predict exactly how it will evolve. But I am confident that we have sent troops who are trained, capable and who will for the first time be able to use their specialized training for this kind of situation.

The member for Calgary spoke about how often we do this without getting recognition or credit. That is one strength of our country, to do what is right and to do it in the most difficult of situations. We have demonstrated time and time again that for a country of our size, with our resources, we are able to make a global contribution far beyond what could reasonably be expected of us.

I say again I am very proud of what the government and the Prime Minister have done. I know we all wish those troops being sent to this very troubled part of the world our best wishes for a successful and safe mission.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member a question which arose today when I spoke to a group of over 100 university students in the West Block. They were here viewing Parliament and how it works. In the question and answer session one asked me: "How come we are spending so much money in other countries when we have such a high level of child poverty here in Canada and when we have our own problems here in Canada? Yet it seems we send more money elsewhere and do not look after our own here in Canada". I gave my answer and I would like to know how the member would have answered that question.

• (1810)

Ms. Catterall: Madam Speaker, my answer to that frankly is that tonight in Canada there are not hundreds of thousands of children in danger of dying. That is what is happening in the great lakes region of Africa. We are dealing with poverty of children at home. It is a desperate situation in our country and it is getting worse, not better.

I think the meeting which our minister is going to have with provincial ministers in the very near future is going to bear results along those lines.

However, there is no such thing as problems that belong to only one country anymore. A problem of this magnitude, of this severity, affects Canada and affects the developed and rich countries of the world. That is why we have an obligation to be there and to prevent the kind of suffering and death that would happen without our being there.

Mr. Silye: Madam Speaker, does the hon. member know what the exact mandate is in Zaire? Does the member know how long the troops are going to be there? Does the member know what the

ultimate costs are going to be? Under what terms and conditions will she consider this mission to be a success?

I understand the humanitarian aspect of it, but now there seems to be a lot of controversy over whether we should even be going. This was a Canadian initiative by the Canadian government, by the Prime Minister himself, and all of a sudden the borders were opened and a lot of the prisoners were let go. Now they are on hold and there was the big debate on Thursday.

It is nice and wonderful to be saying that we care and we want to help, which we do, but on what basis will the member consider this a success and still in light of the problems we have here at home, why do we not address some of those?

Ms. Catterall: Madam Speaker, I could read the member a long list if I had several hours of what we are accomplishing here at home. Those university students the member spoke to earlier today are a very good example of how well we are managing to educate our young people. It is just one small example.

Obviously the situation in the great lakes region is evolving by the hour. That is why it is so important that we have people there on the ground who can keep us apprised of the changing situation. Even when the Prime Minister took his initiative last week I do not think any of us could have predicted the massive movement of refugees that has happened since then.

Has that return of people to their homes out of the refugee camps, has the break-up of the domination and terrorization of those refugees by forces ended as a result of Canada's initiative? I hope so. I would love to take credit for it.

I do not think any of us know how that situation is going to evolve in the next 24 hours, much less in the next week. If the member from Calgary wants a guarantee every time he takes a step out of his front door on what is going to happen to him on that day, I think he is living in the wrong world.

We are there to do something extremely important, to adapt with our allies as the situation develops and to make the best possible use of our resources without undue risk to our personnel.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak today in the House in the debate on the motion presented by the Liberal government. It is vitally important, given the situation that exists in the great lakes region of Africa and the involvement Canada plans to have in it.

The situation in eastern Zaire and on the border with Rwanda changes hourly and it is now important to act with great speed in order to save lives, while ensuring that our soldiers will be able to work within the safest framework possible.

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• (1815)

At this point, I would like to state that it was normal for us to decide to become involved. I feel somewhat the same as the United Nations special envoy to the region, Raymond Chrétien. We could not have remained insensitive, inactive, watching all of this barbarity without taking action, without losing part of our souls in the process.

Consequently, the Bloc Québécois applauds the motion finally presented to us today. The media has been giving us daily reports on the deterioration of the situation in eastern Zaire. Since then, the Bloc Québécois has asked many questions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in order to encourage him to take the initiative at the international level, but all of the responses came back to the idea that Canada was prepared to offer its assistance, but refused further involvement.

It may be that the internal situation currently prevailing in Quebec and in Canada, in which the Liberal government is actually already fully launched into its pre-election campaign, could explain why, finally, the government has decided to go ahead on this.

The Bloc Québécois would like to believe that current initiatives are being taken for humanitarian reasons and to promote international peace, not for the kind of petty political motives that we have come to expect from the federal Liberals.

We must point out that Canada did not acquire its reputation on the international scene by simply engaging in trade, as the Liberal government keeps suggesting.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs suggested earlier that the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade be given daily progress reports on the situation. How can we believe him, since this is the same minister who took advantage of the fact that members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade were away on a mission in Europe to sneak legislation through the House, Bill C-61 which implements a free trade agreement between Canada and Israel?

How can we believe the minister, since the Government of Canada took this initiative regarding Zaire without even taking the trouble to reach members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade abroad? And now the government would have us believe it is interested in their views and in providing information for committee members. This is outright hypocrisy. In its famous red book, the Liberal Party said, however, that: "A Liberal government will also expand the rights of Parliament to debate major Canadian foreign policy initiatives, such as the deployment of peacekeeping forces, and the rights of Canadians to regular and serious consultations on foreign policy issues".

To some extent, the debate we are having today in this House is a farce, since obviously one cannot disagree with this kind of initiative or mission.

In fact, is the government really concerned about the opinion of this Parliament? Unlike what happens in Europe, the government is under no obligation to take into consideration the views of parliamentarians. And even if it were, considering the British parliamentary system, it is clear that the government is formed by the majority in Parliament, which means that consulting Parliament to give some democratic legitimacy to these international initiatives is just window dressing.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs also said that Canada had shown political initiative by mobilizing the international community around the problem in the great lakes region.

I would ask the Minister for Foreign Affairs to be a little more modest, because the initiative did not come from the Canadian government, as he claims, but from France, which for many days had tried to pressure the international community to set up this intervention force. However, France was disqualified from the start by its colonial past, and that is when the Canadian government took the initiative to lead the current mission to Zaire.

And this is par for the course. We warned the government in recent months that the situation was deteriorating in Burundi. And the government replied: "Of course we take note of your comments and we are very concerned, but we want the community of African countries to deal with the situation that is now developing in Burundi", with predictable results, which means it is always more costly to intervene after the fact than to take preventive action.

• (1820)

But the government did not understand that. It waited until the situation deteriorated to take the "initiative", as the Minister of Foreign Affairs said this morning. It is too late. Many people have already died in the region of the African great lakes, a situation which we could probably have prevented if we had acted earlier, as the Bloc Québécois has already been suggesting for several months.

This is why the Bloc Québécois believes it was high time the Canadian government finally took the decision to adopt France's position and unite the international community so that it would not ignore the situation in central Africa. Let us not forget that since the assassination, in 1994, of the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi, we have witnessed, dumbfounded, petrified, helpless and paralysed, the massacres of civilian populations so huge that it defies the imagination.

In the last two years, the international community has not really done anything to find a durable solution to the situation which now prevails in central Africa. Yet, the massacres were only the beginning of the plight of those civilian populations who had to flee to neighbouring countries and were crammed into refugee

camps, some of which held hundreds of thousands of people. Mugunga, the largest refugee camp in the world, had more than 400,000 refugees.

A representative of the Department of National Defence told us this morning that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has estimated that 500,000 refugees are headed back to Rwanda. You will certainly admit that this situation is very alarming and precarious. If you add to this number the 12,000 to 15,000 people who have been entering Rwanda every hour for the last several days, it is obvious that we must help Rwanda to absorb and receive this flood of people.

It must be pointed out that the current crisis in the Great Lakes regions is essentially a political one. Many dictators, like Mobutu Sese Seko, who is now estimated to be worth more than \$10 billion, contributed nothing to the development and stabilization of their country and area in general.

When you look at events in this region, perhaps the most deplorable is the fact that these dictators have often had the support of western countries, which, in the pursuit of their own interests, have allowed them to do whatever they liked. Now the leaders of the various factions within the central African countries of Rwanda, Zaire, Uganda, Burundi and Tanzania have to try to set aside their claims and particular interests in favour of humanitarian considerations.

We have already heard the statements of the main leaders in the area. The leader of the Zairian rebels, Laurent Désiré Kabila, has already said that there is no justification for this international intervention. Zaire has denied landing rights to Canadian planes.

Rwanda has tried to restrict the movements of the Canadian troops that arrived in Kigali yesterday. The President of Rwanda, Pastor Bizimungu, has said he did not consider this operation relevant.

With the latest developments in the region, some countries taking part in the mission, including the United States and Great Britain, are now having doubts about its relevance. As we can see, General Baril, who will be leading the international force, will have no easy task of bringing all those involved together, especially since events are moving very quickly.

Most of the refugees have already moved from eastern Zaire to Rwanda. The international force will therefore have to refocus its mission in order to adapt to the continually changing situation, to the point where some members of the coalition question its relevance.

I see you are smiling, Madam Speaker, and I wonder why, because the current situation is serious, and there is no reason to smile at the events unfolding.

Government Orders

One important point: the mission is to end no later than March 31, 1997, in four and one half months, approximately. This short time frame will severely limit medium and long term approaches to lessening the suffering of the people and stabilizing the situation throughout the region.

The new minister of defence expects this operation to cost about \$100 million.

• (1825)

As regards this significant amount of money, allow me, Madam Speaker, and I hope you are not smiling at this again, to make a suggestion. Since—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): I hope the hon. member will stop attacking the Chair in his comments to the House.

Mr. Bergeron: May I continue, Madam Speaker? Since this humanitarian mission comes under the responsibility of the department of defence, would it not make sense for all the amounts necessary for this mission in the great lakes region of Africa to come out of that department's budget?

Given that the Canadian International Development Agency is already operating with a very modest budget, because of the successive cuts it has suffered at the hands of the Liberal government in recent years, surely it would be appropriate for the department of defence, which, let it not be forgotten, has an annual budget of \$10 billion, to defray the total cost of the operation.

With respect to what needs to be done, short term measures are already clearly laid out in the resolution. Soldiers in the multinational force already have a very clear mandate. They are to facilitate the return of humanitarian organizations, assist with the distribution of food and help refugees return to their homes.

How will Canada contribute to the implementation of a lasting peace after March 31, 1997? Will action be taken to help these people return to normal life? The Canadian command in place should seize the opportunity to try to rally all parties involved in order to try to find possible solutions to the problems that will arise, and there will be problems.

Let us not forget that there is a very strong likelihood of conflict when refugees who left their country months ago try to recover their land and homes. There is a risk of violence in the villages, and the manner in which refugees return to their villages must be monitored.

At first, the role of the multinational force will be to find and distribute food and drinking water. But for the time being, one of the priorities will be to help local men and women farm land they have been away from for more than two years. Communications, roads, airports and transportation systems will have to be restored. This means that, in all likelihood, the civilian population will need the support of the international community.

Government Orders

Of course, financial means remain limited, but the international force's action could focus exclusively on implementing these specific projects. We know that the Liberal government is already on the campaign trail across Canada. We hope that the proposals before us are not merely smoke and mirrors directed at voters in Quebec and Canada.

At a time when our armed forces need to regain confidence and prove their effectiveness, we must be careful not to make the same mistakes as in 1994. We are greatly concerned that this operation might be a ploy to make us forget the flop in Somalia.

Major-General Dallaire did a great job there but, unfortunately, he did not have the necessary resources. This time, the situation is totally different and we are convinced that our troops will do an excellent job.

The Bloc Québécois supports the men and women who will have to work in conditions that could be extremely difficult. It goes without saying that it also supports this mission, even though some questions remain, and we pointed them out.

In conclusion, and given that the holiday season is just around the corner, we should congratulate and thank the men and women who will leave their homes to help the needy populations in Africa's great lakes region.

[*English*]

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was embarrassed to see my hon. colleague take advantage of this situation to make a personal attack on the Chair which was not called for.

I have a question for the hon. member. This morning at ten o'clock in Room 209 of the West Block a briefing was held. The member was not there. If he had been there he would have known the kind of support we are providing to the army, how many aircraft we are shipping there and what kind of aircraft we are shipping. He would have received all the information he asked for in his questions today when he was addressing the issue.

The member mentioned the red book commitment to consult Parliament. We have been doing that. I believe this is the fourth time we have consulted Parliament on important issues, specifically on human rights and peacekeeping issues.

Can he name any other institution in the world in any country which provides a peacekeeping force where they consult the opposition members before they send in the troops? I urge him to elaborate on that so we can be informed of his point of view and can carry on the discussion of this issue in a similar fashion.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): The time provided for consideration of the motion has now expired. It being 6.30 p.m.—

Mr. Bergeron: On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): The hon. member for Verchères on a point of order.

Mr. Bergeron: Madam Speaker, I ask the unanimous consent of the House to have at least the opportunity to answer the question that the hon. member was kind enough to ask me.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): There is no unanimous consent.

* * *

DIVORCE ACT

The House resumed from November 8, 1996 consideration of the motion that Bill C-41, an act to amend the Divorce Act, the Family Orders and Agreements and Enforcement Assistance Act, the Garnishment Attachment and Pension Diversion Act and the Canada Shipping Act, be read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): It being 6.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the third reading motion of Bill C-41.

Call in the members.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 167*)

YEAS**Members**

Adams	Alcock
Allmand	Althouse
Anderson	Arseneault
Assadourian	Asselin
Augustine	Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Barnes	Beaumier
Bélair	Bélanger
Bellemare	Bergeron
Bernier (Beauce)	Bernier (Gaspé)
Bertrand	Bethel
Bevilacqua	Bodnar
Bonin	Boudria
Brien	Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Brushett	Bryden
Calder	Campbell
Cannis	Catterall
Chamberlain	Chan
Cohen	Collenette
Collins	Cowling
Crawford	Crête
Culbert	Cullen
Dalphondu-Guiral	de Savoye
Deshaies	Dingwall
Dion	Dromisky
Duhamel	Eggleton
English	Fillion
Finestone	Finlay
Fontana	Gagliano
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Gagnon (Québec)
Galloway	Gauthier
Gerrard	Godfrey
Graham	Grose
Guay	Harb

Harvard
Hopkins
Jackson
Jordan
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Knutson
Lalonde
Langlois
Lebel
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)
Maloney
Marchand
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCormick
McTeague
Mifflin
Murphy
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Paré
Peters
Pettigrew
Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Reed
Robichaud
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Simmons
Stewart (Brant)
Taylor
Torsney
Vanclief
Walker
Wayne
Young

Hickey
Hubbard
Jacob
Keyes
Kirkby
Kraft Sloan
Landry
Lastewka
Lefebvre
Loney
Malhi
Manley
Marleau
Massé
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord-Ouest)
Mercier
Mitchell
Murray
O'Brien (London—Middlesex)
Pagtakhan
Peric
Peterson
Picard (Drummond)
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Benoit
Gouk
Grubel
Harper (Calgary West/Ouest)
Hill (Macleod)
Jennings
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)
Ramsay
Silye
Speaker
Thompson

Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Grey (Beaver River)
Hanger
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
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Anawak
Bakopanos
Bellehumeur
Canuel
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Daviault
DeVillers
Duceppe
Dupuy
Gaffney
Guimond
Irwin
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Loubier
McGuire
Ménard
O'Brien (London—Middlesex)
Patry
Plamondon
Proud
Sauvageau

Bachand
Bélisle
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Caron
Clancy
Debien
Dubé
Dumas
Easter
Goodale
Ifody
Laurin
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)
Leroux (Shefford)
MacAulay
McWhinney
Nault
Parrish
Phinney
Pomerleau
Rock
Sheridan

Adjournment Debate

Speller
Stewart (Northumberland)
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Wells

St-Laurent
Thalheimer
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Venne
Wood

• (1855)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.)

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

LAND MINES

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Madam Speaker, land mines are an inexpensive, easy way to terrorize enemies, as they cost less than \$3 each and can be dropped by the millions from helicopters.

There are more than 110 million land mines scattered throughout some 69 countries and about as many in stockpiles around the world. In addition, another five million are sold each year.

• (1900)

It is an estimated 25,000 people who are maimed or killed by land mines each year. Nearly one-third of these people lose one or two legs in the accidents. Land mines have also turned huge areas of agricultural land into no man's land in Cambodia, Angola, Mozambique, Bosnia, Croatia and many other countries throughout the globe.

International Red Cross officials also point out that land mines increase the cost of delivering food and medical aid by hundreds of thousands of dollars than ordinarily would be necessary.

We had parliamentarians from South Africa in this House visiting this government a few weeks ago. Those parliamentarians told us that in the little country of Mozambique alone at least one child every day is maimed or killed by a land mine while they are walking to school. The cost to the health care system and the cost to children is abhorrent.

Our Minister for Foreign Affairs held a summit in this country a few weeks ago. What did that summit conclude that Canada and the whole world could do to eliminate this human tragedy of killing children inadvertently?

Mr. Barry Campbell (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her question.

The Ottawa conference brought together 50 states and numerous international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

Adjournment Debate

They were willing to meet in Ottawa because they shared the common objective of achieving a global ban on anti-personnel mines.

The Ottawa conference was highly successful and will have a concrete impact. The aim of the conference was to develop a strategy to achieve a global ban on anti-personnel mines. We now have such a strategy in place in the form of an action plan which outlines numerous concrete activities which states, international organizations and NGOs are willing to undertake to build the necessary political will to achieve a ban.

We were also successful in achieving an agreement on a conference declaration which represents the views of 50 countries on how best to work toward an international ban. One of the most important elements of this declaration was the obligation it placed on state participants to seek the earliest possible conclusion of a legally binding agreement to ban these mines.

In his closing speech to the conference, the foreign affairs minister invited the international community to return to Canada to sign such an agreement by the end of 1997. The timeframe will ensure that the unprecedented international momentum behind the movement to ban mines will be maintained and effectively focused on building the political will necessary to sign such a treaty.

The minister's initiative to achieve such a treaty by the end of 1997 enjoys the support of numerous states and international organizations as well as the secretary general of the United Nations and the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Our initiative is also fully supported by a wide number of NGOs, including the international campaign to ban land mines and Mines Action Canada.

I would like to point out that Canada is leading by example. Last week the Minister of National Defence announced that we now have in place a plan for the complete elimination of our stockpiles of anti-personnel mines beginning with the immediate destruction of two-thirds of our stocks, the remaining one-third to be eliminated in the context of international negotiations which, as the minister has stated, will conclude by the end of 1997.

We believe that establishing the end of 1997 as a deadline for such an agreement is realistic and necessary, particularly given the horrible social and economic costs associated with inaction on the part of the international community.

Canada is willing to work with each and every other like minded country to move the process forward.

Every week over 500 people are killed or maimed by land mines around the world. Canada has taken the lead in calling upon the world to stop the carnage caused by anti-personnel mines.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Minister of the Environment has tabled legislation which puts in front of all Canadians this government's plan to protect endangered species and habitat in Canada.

• (1905)

To his credit, the minister has made some significant changes to the proposals which were circulated for discussion last year. I have to thank all the groups, organizations and individuals who responded to those proposals. Without their input the legislation in front of us now would have been laughable.

But the bottom line today is that while no longer laughable, the legislation is still inadequate. For me the trouble lies in the simple fact that for effectiveness the federal government will continue to rely on the willingness of the provinces to co-operate.

When I asked the minister a question relating to this on October 31, he chose to ignore the specifics and instead concentrated on the generalities. Therefore I am trying once again to secure a more specific answer. Today I am looking for a hint that the Liberals are even considering the subject matter of my question in two parts.

The first part of the question dealt with the idea of a habitat inventory for species currently on the list. I acknowledge that habitat protection is the most critical part of the legislation. We have a list of species considered endangered at this moment but we do not have a specific list of their habitats.

There is a legitimate fear out there expressed by workers in resource companies, by farmers and ranchers and by people living and working in rural communities that this legislation is one day going to jump up and steal away their incomes. We can best deal with protecting critical habitat as well as these fears by doing an inventory of the habitat specific to the species on the endangered list. We can best devise and structure recovery and management plans if we have an inventory. I want to know if the minister is giving any consideration to this matter.

I am also concerned that without an inventory the only way we will know that habitat protection needs to be undertaken is if an environmental assessment on some project tells us that something needs to be done. We should not need to be always reacting to project proposals in these matters. We should be acting in advance of proposals being considered and an inventory will aid in this process.

The second part of my question dealt with the effectiveness of enforcement mechanisms. As I have already said, the legislation recognizes the national accord for the protection of species at risk signed by the provinces in which each of the provinces agrees to establish complementary legislation and programs that provide for

its effective protection of species at risk and for the protection of their habitat.

However, there is no clear understanding of what happens should one or more provinces fail to provide adequate protection. If this were health care and the federal government truly cared about health, the Canada Health Act provides for penalties when the provinces do not live up to the standards set at the national level. Those penalties are financial penalties but on environmental matters, in particular the protection of endangered species, there is no similar penalty. There does not appear to be even the threat of a penalty that the federal government can make.

My question was for the minister to tell us what enforcement powers he has at his disposal to ensure the provinces establish adequate companion protection.

Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to point out to the constituents of the member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake that he works very hard on environmental initiatives in this House. In responding to his questions I would like to say that Bill C-65, the Canadian Endangered Species Protection Act, is the first ever federal legislation to protect endangered species in Canada.

The purpose of this act is to prevent Canadian wildlife species from becoming extinct as a result of human activity and to secure their recovery. This act along with provincial and territorial co-operation in ensuring complementary legislation and programs will afford protection to endangered species across the country.

The provinces and the territories have agreed to a national accord for the protection of species at risk. Under the terms of the accord the provinces and the territories are co-operating with the federal government to ensure that complementary legislation and programs are put into place.

The act formalizes the existing process by which we identify those species that are endangered. The committee on the status of endangered wildlife in Canada, COSEWIC, comprises a group of independent scientific experts who review and report on the status of wildlife species in Canada.

The bill now provides a legal basis for the committee and formalizes its work under Canadian law. This bill recognizes that

Adjournment Debate

habitat is fundamental to the protection of species. On the official listing of an endangered species, activities causing damage or destruction to its residence, such as its den, nest or burrow, will be prohibited. We also recognize that we need to go beyond the immediate residence of a given species in order to protect its critical habitat.

The mandatory recovery plans will address the threats to the survival of the species, including threats to critical habitat as defined by the scientific experts. As far as federal lands are concerned, the minister and his colleagues will be made aware of species listed annually by COSEWIC.

This bill gives the federal government the authority to create regulations needed to regulate or prohibit activities that will adversely affect the species or its critical habitat. The act also enables regulations prohibiting activities that wilfully harm species at risk that cross Canada's international boundaries in the absence of equivalent action by the provinces.

It also provides for emergency orders in the event that immediate action is required for the protection of a species. Where loss of habitat is identified as an imminent threat, emergency orders will include measures for its protection.

Under the national accord with the provinces and territories, all jurisdictions are publicly accountable for their actions and decisions. If a province chooses not to provide species protection, that decision will be on the public record. Further, the accord provides for a mechanism to address any such disputes that may arise.

Governments have a duty and a responsibility to work in partnership with one another, and with concerned citizens across the country and around the world, to prevent species from becoming extinct.

This act, along with complementary provincial and territorial legislation and programs, does just that by putting the needs of nature first.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.12 p.m.)

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