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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, September 25, 2001

—
Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, September 25, 2001

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table, pursuant to section 66 of the Official Languages Act, the annual report of the Commissioner of Official Languages for the period starting on April 1, 2000 and ending on March 31, 2001.

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(4)(a), this report is permanently referred to the Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

CANADA-U.S. MEETING

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC/DR): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wrote to the Prime Minister last night asking if he would make a full statement to the House, as is the custom in this place, with regard to his recent conversations yesterday with the president of the United States on a matter of such grave interest to the House of Commons.

Has the House received any indication as to whether or not the Prime Minister would take advantage of that parliamentary opportunity to inform parliament, in the normal way, of those discussions?

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the right hon. member for his question. I will take it under advisement. I do not have any information on that at the moment.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Canadian Alliance) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-396, an act to amend the Criminal Code (dangerous child sexual predators).

He said: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this private member's bill titled, *Carrie's Guardian Angel Law*. The purpose of the bill is to ensure that the fullest force of the law is brought to bear upon violent sexual predators.

Under the bill a violent sexual predator would receive a sentence of 20 years to life, with no chance of parole, in cases of sexual assault and aggravated sexual assault situations on a child, which also involved the use of a weapon, repeated assaults, multiple victims, repeat offences, more than one offender, confinement or kidnapping or the use of position of trust with respect to the child for sexual advantage.

• (1005)

To the victims and their families, the bill represents a return to fundamental justice. To those who prey on the young and the vulnerable in our society, if caught, they will be punished and punished severely.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-397, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (support payments).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce a bill to amend the Income Tax Act. This bill will allow parents having joint custody of their children to claim basic deductions proportionally and equitably.

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

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

LABELLING OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I pleased to present a petition that is very timely in terms of a motion passed overwhelmingly by the House last April.

The petitioners acknowledge a couple of well established facts: one that the consumption of alcoholic beverages may cause health problems; and the other, that fetal alcohol syndrome and alcohol related birth defects are preventable by avoiding alcohol during pregnancy.

Supply

They call upon the House to mandate the labelling of alcoholic products to warn pregnant women and other persons of certain dangers associated with the consumption of alcoholic beverages.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present a petition on behalf of 90 constituents in Nanaimo—Cowichan who are deeply concerned about the fact that many health care workers in Canada are expected to assist in providing controversial services, such as abortion and promoting controversial material against their conscience.

The petitioners urge the Government of Canada to enact legislation that explicitly recognizes the freedom of conscience of health care workers.

* * *

● (1010)

[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—RESPONSE TO TERRORIST ATTACKS

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ) moved:

That this House urge the government, in any reprisals taken in reaction to the terrorist strikes in New York on September 11, not to commit Canadian armed forces in any offensive action until the House of Commons has been consulted and has voted on the matter.

He said: Madam Speaker, I would first like to advise that I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Saint-Jean.

We are here today to discuss a motion by the Bloc Québécois. The motion's importance stems from the tragic events of the last weeks, events to which we are trying to find the best and most peaceful solution possible.

It is important that the Parliament of Canada be consulted by the government before any major decision is taken regarding Canadian participation in any military action.

It is democracy that has been attacked and, therefore, it is up to democracy to defend itself. When the terrorists attacked the Pentagon, what they targeted was the power, the symbol of military power, not only of the United States but of the free democratic world as a whole. When the terrorists attacked the World Trade Center, it was the economic powers that they attacked. When they targeted the White House, fortunately without success, it was the political power

that they singled out. Since the target was democracy, it is up to democracy to defend itself. This is critical, in our view.

Parliament must also be consulted because, should there be military action, the lives of hundreds of thousands of Quebecers and Canadians would be at stake. The decision to send its sons and daughters to fight for democracy has to be the most important one a parliament can make. Such a decision cannot, we believe, be made by the government alone. It cannot decide to put the lives of our fellow citizens at risk and not ask those elected to represent them to make this most important decision in a non-partisan spirit.

Parliament must also be consulted because the events that will unfold in the coming weeks and months could very well shape our whole future. Democracy and the free world are at stake. The goal pursued by terrorists was to destabilize the values, which are dear to us and which we have fought to defend over the years and down through the generations. These are the values we are fighting for daily in this parliament, despite our ideological differences.

The issue of consulting parliament is so fundamental, in our view, that we have a hard time understanding why the Prime Minister who on the very first day of this session opened the door to a critical consultation of parliament and a vote on crucial issues, is now backtracking. It is unbelievable.

It is out of the question for us to accept such an attitude on the part of the government on issues that are so fundamental for us and for those who may be called upon to put their own lives at risk in a conflict, the outcome of which is unfortunately never known at the outset.

● (1015)

It strikes us as unacceptable that the government is settling for responses that are not only ready made but, let us admit it, partisan along the lines of "We are consulting parliament".

It is true that parliament is consulted on a certain number of subjects, when missions of this nature are involved, but most of the time the discussions held here are for the purpose of obtaining the members' points of view after the important decisions have already been reached.

It makes the Prime Minister and the government look good to say that there is a new type of debate in parliament and that from now on members can express their points of view when troops are to be deployed.

What we are calling for, however, is that before the government commits to actions of such importance it require not only the opinion of members, and a general point of view on what must or must not be done, but also the approval of parliament, pure and simple. There must be votes in this parliament so that the government knows where the representatives of the people stand on future actions. This is the very basis of democracy.

What we are asking is not unrealistic. Let us look at what other countries have done in the same context.

In France, Prime Minister Jospin said "—decisions of this kind could not be reached by the executive without consultation of the National Assembly and the Senate".

Supply

Argentina made its participation in any military intervention conditional on a vote in its parliament.

In Germany the lower chamber, the Bundestag, voted to give the government the mandate to take part in any military action.

From information I received only this morning as I was preparing my notes for this speech, in India. The opposition was consulted, and will be consulted on any participation involving services or other contributions.

In Great Britain, although their parliament is not sitting, when Mr. Blair returned he consulted not only the European Union but also MPs from all the parties in order to find out their opinion.

When the major democracies of the world are behaving like democracies, we have trouble understanding, as do those who are listening to us, why the Prime Minister is afraid to submit to a vote in this parliament decisions of such great importance as the one to join in the fight against terrorism. Why do the Prime Minister and his government fear democracy?

We in the Bloc Québécois have shown a sense of responsibility from the beginning of this crisis. We have tried, through our suggestions, to support the government and to give it credibility. In response to this co-operation, the Prime Minister is now rejecting any confirmation by a vote the consultation of parliament.

Yesterday, our Prime Minister went to Washington. Observers consider that he was not taken so seriously. What stature he would have commanded if he had met the president of the United States armed not only with his opinion and that of his ministers' who incidentally are appointed by him, but also with the opinion of all Canadian parliamentarians, with a serious, credible vote that would have given him a credibility that he unfortunately did not have?

When one wants to look like a head of state, one behaves like a head of state, and the Prime Minister did not behave like a head of state. He refuses to consult parliament.

• (1020)

He went to a Liberal Party fundraising dinner to talk about his visit with the president of the United States and he expects to be taken seriously.

He still has a chance to make amends. He must allow parliament to voice its opinion by voting on any major decision to be taken in this context.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I see a member rising on questions or comments, but unfortunately he is not in his place. Or is he rising on debate?

An hon. member: I would like to make a comment.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I am sorry, but since the member is not in his place, I must give the floor to the member for Saint-Jean.

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I invite my colleague to put his question to me after my speech. I think it is important for him to be in his seat. I am sure that is the message you were trying to get across. It is also important for him to get closer to our House leader and to those who will be speaking later

on. The discussions that we are having here today are very important.

The motion asks that the House urge the government to consult parliament. I believe this is a very serious issue. Yesterday, we saw the Prime Minister of Canada go to Washington without the formal support of parliament. He may have had the support of the executive, of cabinet, but he did not have the support of parliament.

He went to meet with the President of the U.S., who has the support of both houses of Congress. In the U.S. Senate as well as in the House of Representatives, these discussions went beyond any partisan considerations.

I think this is what parliament is all about, that is to give all elected members not only the right to express their views on an issue, but also the fundamental right to vote on the issue. It is the same as if an election campaign were to provide for heated debates between candidates but, in the end, no opportunity for the people to vote.

I think people have to be asked to vote. When the people voted, whether they voted for an individual and a party or an individual representing a party, they asked that person to sit in parliament, to which they had elected him, to debate and to vote on all of the issues. That is what counts.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister did not have a mandate from parliament. He had a mandate from cabinet, but not from parliament.

If we look at all of the countries of the world in the context of this crisis, I think armed forces, including those of the G-7, will certainly draw on the decisions of their respective parliaments. The French president has just made a commitment. He has said, "We cannot use force, involve our army, without consulting the National Assembly". He has made that commitment.

Yesterday, Tony Blair, the British prime minister, not only briefed people, but he is planning to recall parliament before the date set, because he also wants to draw on parliament. He will thus be speaking on behalf of all members of the British parliament. It is important to remember this.

The same is true in Germany. Probably for historical reasons, this is in the German constitution. Because of the two world wars, when Germany wants to use force, it must consult its parliament.

The Canadian Prime Minister cannot remain outside what the major powers are doing. Of course, we already have problems with our army. We cannot contribute a whole lot. Still, if parliamentarians have the opportunity to speak their mind, we can then come up with solutions. Democracy will then decide. How will it do so? By letting each member of this parliament vote on these questions. That is the aim of the motion before us.

Each of the members is well equipped to do so. We are used to making decisions. I would even say that we can make decisions that are often very difficult. The decision for which we want the government to respond to our request is a difficult one. The decision to send Canadians and Quebecers into a conflict that could be lengthy and dangerous is the responsibility of each member. We each have our points of entry in this debate and in the vote. We will hold a considered vote based on what each member must do.

Supply

A member is someone who already—this is true in my case—has a file, who is in contact with the army, who can discuss at length with members of the armed forces and listen to their viewpoint.

A member of parliament is also someone who listens to his constituents. Since there cannot always be unanimity, a majority of voters may say “I think you should defend my point of view and go so far as to vote according to it”. This is the fundamental role of a member in this House. His role is not to merely discuss issues.

So far, we have been discussing and we have expressed our opinion to the Prime Minister. Now, we want to go the next step, a step without which it is useless and totally pointless to discuss issues. If we have a debate without a vote, we can talk until we are blue in the face. However, the fundamental decision, the decision that history will remember, will be the one recorded in *Hansard*, following a vote, that will show how members voted on the motion. So, this is very important.

Members of parliament also listen to interest groups. Peace groups come to see us and so do more aggressive ones. We must listen to these people. This is why I say that we are perfectly capable of making these sometimes difficult decisions.

We should not miss this opportunity to strengthen the role of MPs. How many times have we heard comments such as, “Backbenchers never have a say”. This is a typical example of the importance of the members of the House as a whole, both backbenchers and ministers. When a vote takes place here, everyone has a voice. The Prime Minister or any minister does not carry more weight. The process is fair to everyone. Sure, the government can always rely on its majority, but this is normal and at least members can vote on these issues.

Members who will be expressing their opinions today want to do more than talk. They want to do more than have a debate. They want to do more than engage in rhetoric. They want all these speeches and discussions to end with their vote, a vote based on what I mentioned earlier namely their files, their voters, the interest groups that contacted them and the feedback provided by their office, which receives calls every day on this issue. We must take all this into account and give MPs an opportunity to give some finality to the debate through a vote.

There is the importance of debating and the importance of voting. There is also the importance of knowing, in the motion before us, what the financial consequences will be, for there are financial consequences. However, at the outset I must say that the primary consequence for a member is that Quebecers and Canadians will be sent into a risky conflict. That is the main thing I said earlier that we were used to taking decisions. The most difficult part about taking those decisions is that we are the lives and health of people.

We know that not everyone is killed in a conflict but some people come back in pretty rough shape. We have only to think of the gulf war and the conflict in the Balkans. Some people who went over lost their lives, but others came back with their health broken, which is almost as bad. We therefore have a very great responsibility.

Similarly, the cost to the Canadian taxpayer will also be great. Once again, members do not want to be restricted to debating the matter.

●(1025)

They want to have their say in a vote on a motion, with the financial consequences that vote will imply.

So far, the performance of the Minister of Finance has been sadly lacking. He has said nothing has been planned yet in this regard and that he would do everything possible to avoid a deficit.

If we decide to make an additional commitment and troops are sent to Afghanistan or if we increase our participation to make up for the shortfall in our international commitments such as replacing the Americans in the field in Bosnia, this is bound to have financial consequences.

I therefore think that members of this House have everything they need to be well informed in the debate and that they are certainly in a position to vote, which is essential in a democracy.

Just to tie this in with the proposal I just made regarding financial resources, I wish to move an amendment to the motion moved by the member for Roberval.

I move:

That the motion be amended by adding after the word “action” the following: “nor any financial resources”.

●(1030)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I would like to inform the member that the Chair will take the amendment into consideration and report later to the House as to whether it is in order.

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to know what my colleague from Saint-Jean thinks about the comments made by representatives of the Liberal Party in 1990, when, on the issue of the gulf war, the member at that time, the Deputy Prime Minister, stated:

Liberals insist that before Canadians are called upon to participate in any offensive action, such participation must first be brought before parliament and voted on here in the way it was done at the time of the Korean conflict.

It was the Liberals who were calling on the government for a vote, as we are doing today.

What does my colleague from Saint-Jean think of this?

Mr. Claude Bachand: Madam Speaker, my colleague has just given us an example where the Deputy Prime Minister, back then, answered back to the Conservative government in office “You must consult us, but you must also allow us to vote on it”.

Incidentally, I would like to remind my colleague that there was not only one member of the opposition at the time who questioned the government about this. I believe all the Liberal members of the opposition asked that there be a vote.

Unfortunately, this is not the only example of an opposition party that forgets the past once elected to government. They should re-read *Hansard* and ask themselves if they are not contradicting themselves on their positions of the past.

In the case that my honourable colleague raised, the Liberals are indeed in contradiction with their stand at the time. For this reason, we are asking them to demonstrate that they are listening and to allow all members a vote on this issue.

As for the Bloc Québécois, while I do not believe we will ever form the government, we would not contradict ourselves, unlike the Liberals certainly are, from when they were the opposition compared to today as government.

Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ): Madam Speaker, during question period, when we came back we asked the Prime Minister if there would be a vote, since consulting the House appeared essential in such an important debate on the attacks. In his reply the Prime Minister indicated that there would be consultation in the House.

Our understanding was that it would not be mere consultation as part of an exploratory debate, but that a vote would be taken in the House of Commons to give ourselves some power.

Later the Prime Minister recanted. What does my colleague, the hon. member for Saint-Jean, think of that tactic on the government's part?

• (1035)

Mr. Claude Bachand: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, the hon. member for Châteauguay, for his question. I believe there is indeed a discrepancy between what the Prime Minister said at the beginning of the session and the statement he made later, saying that he was not sure whether people would be asked to vote on the issue.

Today it must be clear that this motion is more than just a motion put forward by an opposition group or a political party. It concerns all members who are not ministers or the Prime Minister. What matters today is that members realize that we are sending a message, not only to opposition members, but also to all members of this House who, sadly, are all too often confronted to positions taken by this government's executive branch the cabinet that is, and are expected to toe the line.

What we want to do today is get a vote. We are asking the Prime Minister to allow all backbenchers of his party to vote. We want these people, all the members, not only to give their opinion on the issue but also to vote on it. This is a fundamental principle and the Prime Minister must not miss this opportunity to take a measure which will satisfy all members of the House of Commons.

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to this motion and to reassert the government's commitment to consulting and having an open debate on defence and foreign policy issues.

[*English*]

The first part of the motion presented by the hon. member for Roberval calls for consultation. We on this side of the House have no difficulty with that. We have put it into practice and used it in a meaningful way for a great number of years.

However the second part of the motion calls for a different kind of procedure and debate in the House that would culminate in a vote of parliament. It is for that reason that I rise to oppose the Bloc motion.

Supply

First, I do so because it would break with a current Canadian parliamentary practice that has been in effect for some eight years, the life of this government, a practice that has worked exceedingly well.

Second, the motion deals with a hypothetical situation. We do not know whether our armed forces will be called on for a combat role in the campaign against terrorism at this time.

Third, the motion creates difficulty in terms of the timeliness and effectiveness of being able to move our resources, both assets and personnel, to help deal with these kinds of struggles and tragedies. This would sometimes require swift deployment of troops, perhaps at times when the House is not sitting. The government would not be able to wait a very long time to do that.

Finally a reason for not supporting the component of the motion which calls for a vote of parliament is that quite frankly such decisions should be made by the government. That is what we were elected to do.

Yes, we need to consult with and fully inform as best we can members of parliament. However it is ultimately the responsibility of the Government of Canada to make the decisions for which it must be accountable to parliament and the people of Canada.

It would be better to direct the energies of the House toward responding to the tragedy of September 11 than to engage in the kinds of procedural debates or wrangles we are seeing this morning.

If we take the discussion beyond the current eight year practice in terms of the matter being dealt with in parliament, it is interesting to note that no formal parliamentary resolution was ever made with respect to the entry of Canada into the Korean war in 1950.

Even in 1939 at the outset of World War II there was no specific resolution of parliament declaring war on Nazi Germany. Parliamentary approval for the government's policy was shown through support in the Speech from the Throne and the defence estimates. There was no resolution of parliament. There was no vote at all in parliament on the declaration of war against imperial Japan.

Since 1950 Canada has had over 50 peace support operations of varying size. For many of these missions parliament was not consulted at all if they were small. For the roughly 20 major missions debated in the House there were only five recorded votes. Three motions were agreed to without a recorded vote.

The government has delivered on what it promised to do: expand the rights of parliament to debate major Canadian foreign policy initiatives such as peacekeeping deployments.

Supply

Since 1994 we have consulted parliament on many of the international missions carried out by the Canadian forces. We held a debate most recently in October 2000 prior to deploying Canadian forces personnel to Ethiopia and Eritrea. Debates were held in the House during the Kosovo crisis. The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs met numerous times, either jointly or separately, to discuss the issue.

There was in addition a series of detailed technical briefings by military and other officials to make sure members of the House were well informed of developments in the Balkans. Two debates were held in April 1998 and February 1999 regarding the deployment of peacekeeping forces to the Central African Republic. We held a debate on potential military action against Iraq in February 1998.

• (1040)

In November 1996 we debated Canada's leadership role in alleviating the suffering in the African great lakes region. We also held more than one debate on Canada's role in implementing the measures taken by the international community to maintain stability and security in Haiti. This demonstrates that parliament's role has extended beyond consultation on deployments.

In 1994 a series of joint committees were especially organized to take an indepth look at Canada's foreign and defence policies. Their work led to the adoption of a new defence policy and a review of Canada's foreign policy.

Parliament has also played a major role in many other aspects of foreign and defence policy. For example, the expansion of NATO, the renewal of the NORAD agreement that provides for the security and defence of North America, and Canadian policy on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, arms control and disarmament have all been subjects of consultations with parliament.

[*Translation*]

As for the tragedy that struck the United States, there have been three separate debates about it over the last week.

[*English*]

The September 17 special debate, the September 18 Canadian Alliance opposition day debate and the September 20 evening debate on the Prime Minister's meeting with President Bush have all been the subject of discussion in the House. I think these examples show that this government and this party are committed to consulting with parliament and will continue to do so.

I will also add that the motion put forward by the Bloc Quebecois deals with a hypothetical situation. The question of armed forces outlined in the motion is clearly hypothetical. There is no UN, NATO or United States request to deploy Canadian troops to respond to the events of September 11. There is none at this point in time.

What is certain, however, is that the struggle that lies ahead will be a long and difficult one. This will not be a simple or a quick campaign. The world is faced with an elusive enemy that works in the shadows and uses unconventional techniques. We do not expect this campaign to be run by the conventional methods of war. President Bush himself underlined this in his speech last Thursday.

This will not be like World War II. This will not be like the Gulf war. It will not be like Kosovo. There may be aspects of conventional military operations involved, but ultimately it will take a different kind of effort to weed out the perpetrators of this violence.

For that reason we must be prepared for a sustained and intensive effort, one that uses all available tools at our disposal, including diplomatic, military and economic means. Yesterday, both in the House and in the United States, there was much discussion about cutting off the funding to these people who inflict this terrorism.

The United States has already pre-positioned some of its military forces into the Middle East area where many of the terrorist organizations exist, near Afghanistan, near the operation that is the headquarters of Osama bin Laden. It is normal in times of crisis for military forces to move in such a fashion and pre-position, but let me make it clear that no decision has been made by the United States as to how this campaign will be carried out and how these forces will be used. This is clearly positioning. It is also quite obviously a tool to put pressure on the Taliban and Afghanistan to give up bin Laden.

The Americans have not asked for anything specific from Canada at this time in terms of future military contributions. However, we have already responded to the United States requests as events unfolded between September 11 and now. I think the Canadian forces have been doing an excellent job in meeting those requests.

Canadian CF-18s work closely with their American counterparts in Norad to defend North American airspace from further terrorist attacks. We put additional planes into the Norad system at their request. Three Canadian forces vessels were put on a heightened state of readiness to deliver humanitarian aid to the United States ports if it should be necessary. At the same time members of the disaster assistance response team, who responded so quickly and effectively to natural disasters in Turkey and Honduras, were also put on active alert in Trenton in order for them to be able to move into the United States to assist in New York or Washington.

The Canadian forces also responded quickly to the domestic demands of more than 200 rerouted planes placed in Canadian communities across the country. Within hours of learning that flights were being diverted into Canada, Canadian forces Airbus and Hercules aircraft worked closely with local airports, Transport Canada, Red Cross workers and countless volunteers to provide important resources across the country to help cope with the heavy influx of travellers. Their efforts deserve recognition and the gratitude of Canadians. We can be proud of their reaction.

At the same time members of the Canadian forces were setting up shelters and bases in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Manitoba to accommodate some of the thousands of distraught passengers and crew who found themselves stranded in our country. The assistance that was both offered and provided by the Canadian forces was an important part of the overall national response efforts.

Organizing the many aspects of this response was no small task and here the federal government's new Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Emergency Preparedness played and continues to play a key co-ordination role. Officials at OCIEP are working in close co-operation with the U.S. federal emergency management agency, FEMA, in this connection.

• (1045)

I think the excellent work of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian forces in the days following the attacks demonstrates that we are ready and able to respond whenever we are called upon. As we move forward the Canadian forces continue to work with the U.S. and our allies through our intelligence community, which has put on an extra effort at the request of the United States in terms of intelligence gathering and analysis. From them to our binational command of NORAD, our Canadian forces are maintaining a close working relationship with their counterparts in the United States.

As we can see, we have been there with the Americans and they have thanked us for what we have done. We will continue to be there as we prepare to embark on this campaign against terrorism. We have capabilities in the Canadian forces that we can still make available. Moreover last Friday I authorized more than 100 Canadian forces personnel who were serving in the United States and other allied military forces to participate in any operations conducted by their host units in response to the recent terrorist attack.

I can assure the House that we are not looking to play a symbolic role. We are looking to play a very meaningful role. As the United States comes through the planning stage it will then consult with Canada and other allies to determine how we can work together. It is by working together that we will be able to use our capabilities in a complementary way. That is why the Prime Minister travelled to Washington yesterday and why I leave for Brussels later today to meet with our NATO allies.

We are in the process of building a coalition of countries that recognize the need to suppress terrorism. Let me assure the House that Canada will work with our allies, but we will not rush into any decisions concerning our response without thorough and balanced consideration. If, after consultations with the United States and our allies, it is decided that Canada would contribute combat troops, let me remind the members of the House that the Prime Minister has already pledged that the House, as is our custom and has been our practice for many years, will be fully consulted.

Let me make one last point concerning the Bloc Quebecois motion. It is important that Canada be able to respond quickly and flexibly to the events of September 11. While we are committed to consulting Canadians and members of the House, we are equally committed to making the most effective contribution to peace and freedom.

• (1050)

[*Translation*]

That is precisely what we have been doing since September 11.

Supply

[*English*]

This is what we will continue to do in the coming months as we stand with the United States and our allies in this campaign to suppress terrorism.

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the minister some questions. I have been asking them for two weeks now and have not been getting a lot of answers so I am hoping that today we can just have a little back and forth and get some real information.

The minister said that we should not be spending the energy of the House on this motion, that we should be talking about deployment, so let us talk about deployment. The minister also said that Canada's contribution would not be just a token contribution, that it would be substantial, with our NATO allies.

I would just like to ask the minister exactly what that contribution could be, not what it will be, but what Canada is capable of supplying looking at the fact that the number of our forces has dropped from 90,000 when this government took office to probably under 55,000 now, and according to some experts it is heading down still quite rapidly. Considering that this government has cut the defence budget in real terms by 30%, that our equipment is so badly outdated, starting with the Sea King and going right down the line, that we have mostly gaps in our equipment, we do not have an awful lot to offer. It is important that if we send our troops into a combat situation they have good equipment.

Even our F-18s, which the minister so often refers to, have been cut from 122 to 80 now, with a pledge to cut the number to 50. It is not just the planes themselves, of course, but also the pilots. We have lost more than half of our experienced pilots who flew in Kosovo. In regard to ordnance, I have had rumours fed to me, and judging from where they came I would say they are more than rumours, that in fact we are so short of smart bombs and other equipment needed in this type of situation that we cannot possibly go ahead until we restock in these areas.

I would like to ask the minister just what we can send and what his plans are in terms of emergency spending to restock some of this ordnance and to take other emergency measures to deal with this important situation.

Hon. Art Eggleton: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is getting way ahead of himself. I clearly indicated that we should not be getting into procedural debates. I also indicated that it is premature to talk about a hypothetical situation. We really do not know what will be required. I will not speculate on what is required in terms of the long term or even the short term campaign against terrorism.

We are in consultation with our allies and with the United States and as it is determined what role we can play we will, as best we can, be happy to provide that information, subject, always, to national security.

Supply

With respect to the strength of the Canadian forces, as has been said time and again, we have a recruitment challenge as every other country does, the United States and other countries. We are down to a total strength of about 58,500. Our effective strength—I noticed some article on that this morning—is lower than that but that is because we have a number of people who are in training. At any given time people are going through education courses and various training activities.

I must also say, on an optimistic note, that our recruitment is way up. Recruitment numbers this year are up substantially over last year with our new recruitment program. Our attempts also to retain current military personnel, together with the recruitment, will help us to bring our numbers up.

It is also worth bearing in mind that while these numbers are lower we do have a lot of new equipment and technology which means the force projection of those numbers is greater than what the force projection of those numbers would have been, certainly 10 years ago.

The hon. member talked about budget cuts again. Back in the days of the deficit, way over there on that side of the House, in that party in particular, they were saying cut government spending. I did not hear them say cut government spending but do not cut defence.

I was here back in 1993 and I never heard that at all. It has become convenient for them to say that nowadays but back in those days they were saying cut government spending. Everybody was saying it. Nobody said exempt defence. Nobody said exempt health care or exempt anything else. Everything was put on the table and the budget cuts were based so we could get our fiscal house in order. We have been able to do that. Other countries have done that as well. Many other countries, including the United States, cut their defence budgets but now our defence budget is going up. We have invested some \$3 billion more in the last three years.

In terms of equipment, the member conveniently forgets that we do have a lot of good, modern equipment. Yes, we have some equipment that needs replacing. Of course the Sea King needs replacing. However we have new Coyotes that are the envy of many other militaries and were requested recently by the United States and other countries to be part of the operation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

We played a very frontline role in Kosovo with our CF-18s. We have more precision guided munitions on order and if we were to engage in any conflict, we would need to make sure we had the necessary equipment to do that.

However, it would be very premature to talk about that. The member talked about the cut in the number of CF-18s. We have cut them down to a level that is still higher than what the white paper on defence policy of 1994 said we required.

I do not think the member has his facts right at all. We have more pilots now than we had at Kosovo. We may not have the same pilots, as there is always a turnover, but we have good pilots.

During an interview the other day involving the former supreme allied commander, General Clark, he said that the Canadian pilots were exceptional, that they were top class and that they continue to

be top class. We have and have always had great training programs in this country. These are some illustrations. The member has a lot of his facts wrong.

•(1055)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will point out to the Minister of National Defence that history will tell whether Canada has done what had to be done.

More and more observers are beginning to say that Canada is not taken seriously. On the other hand, what is put forward today in this House is serious. There might be terrorists inside our country. As members know, the Prime Minister said yesterday that it was an attack that was carried out against our neighbours, close to home. That is why the Bloc Québécois wants the issue to be considered in the House and a vote taken here with regard to any military intervention.

I quote the Deputy Prime Minister, who was sitting in the official opposition in 1990 when he said this:

Liberals insist that before Canadians are called upon to participate in any offensive action, such participation must first be brought before Parliament and voted on here in the way it was done at the time of the Korean conflict.

I would therefore ask this to the Minister of National Defence: Why not accept today what the Liberal Party was asking for in 1990, all the more so since it is about a crisis happening at our doorsteps?

•(1100)

[*English*]

Hon. Art Eggleton: Madam Speaker, the hon. member noted the debate about Korea but there was no vote in this parliament on Korea.

I was not here in 1990 so I do not know the circumstances that led to the call at that point in time by our party, then in opposition, for a vote on the matter. I can tell members that each case has to be judged on its own merit and on its own individual circumstance. In the eight years that I have been here and this government has existed, we have developed a very open consultation process for all members to engage in the major potential deployments of our military. That practice will continue. The Prime Minister has made it clear that there will be consultations here.

Canada is prepared to play a meaningful role and will play a meaningful role in both the short and the long term. We have already played one. If it involves the deployment of our Canadian forces overseas, then there will be consultation with parliament.

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC/DR): Madam Speaker, I will not debate the abilities of our Canadian armed forces and its defence capabilities right now but I would certainly like to touch on the issue of the gulf war in 1990.

It has been proven that there was a debate in the House and that there was a vote in the House, as the Bloc member indicated. I would simply like to suggest to the minister that times have changed. Canadians, the citizens of this country, now have access through the Internet and through the media and they want to be involved.

If troops are to be sent to an offensive action, why is the minister afraid to put a motion on the floor of the House that would be voted on by every member of parliament and show support to the government that it needs to send our troops overseas? Why is he so afraid to do that?

Hon. Art Eggleton: Madam Speaker, the truth is that we are not afraid to take on our responsibilities. We will take on our responsibilities and we will be accountable to parliament and to the Canadian people for the decisions we make.

However, as has been the practice and what has worked well for the last eight years, is that part of making that decision will be listening to the members of parliament in the House of Commons.

Mr. Leon Benoit: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Considering the gravity of this issue, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to have the minister answer questions for another 10 or 15 minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I will be dividing my time with the member for Lakeland. I would like to thank my colleagues from the Bloc for bringing this resolution forward.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I did not rule yet on the amendment. I would like to do that before we begin the debate because we will be debating the amendment. The amendment is in order. We will resume debate on the amendment.

Mr. Brian Pallister: Madam Speaker, I think the proposal raises an excellent topic, which is the issue of how to appropriately respond to a circumstance we are faced with as a nation that is certainly not without precedent but without precedent in terms of its impact on North America.

The events of two weeks ago are events we deplore. The question of how we should respond in the House and how the government should respond is at issue. Certainly the Canadian Alliance policy position should be put on the record and I will do so now. I quote from our policy document which states:

We will make Parliament responsible for exercising effective oversight over the conduct of Canadian foreign policy, and the commitment of Canadian Forces to foreign operations.

The issue of parliamentary oversight is one that I have heard addressed here, in the few months that I have been here, and it certainly has been addressed by members on this side of the House with increasing frequency since the government came to power. Part of the reason for that increasing frequency is the fact that as the government remains in power there seems to be a tendency for that power to increasingly centralize in the Prime Minister's Office and in the hands of the Prime Minister himself as opposed to remaining dispersed, as it more appropriately should be, among the members of this responsible body.

This view is shared by many. I will quote from Donald Savoie's book, *Governing from the Centre*, in which he says:

Supply

While I argue that the centre and, in particular, the hand of the Prime Minister, has been considerably strengthened in recent years, this is not to suggest that the federal government is better able to define new strategic direction or a coherent plan to which all government departments can contribute. It is ironic perhaps that as the hand at the centre has been strengthened, its ability to manage horizontal issues has been weakened.

At no time has it been more evident than in recent weeks that Mr. Savoie's comments are not only accurate but are illustrative of a problem for our country. The reality is that the Prime Minister's office has centralized responsibility for decision making within its own confines. The reality is that the government did not even bother to strike a committee to discuss defence issues. The reality is that the Prime Minister and his close advisors, his closet or his court, made decisions immediately following the events and very likely will continue to make decisions that will affect us in many profound ways.

One of the key aspects that we should be addressing in the House is our relationship with the United States. Bilateral relations with the United States are key to our country in many ways, not the least of which is economically.

One trend that all of us should be aware of is the increasing closeness between the populations of these two countries. As with many trends, the effects of this change will be felt disproportionately throughout our country, but the reality is that Canadians and Americans are closer than ever before. An illustration of that is the reaction among the Canadian people to the events in the United States over the last few weeks. The impressive display of support and of honest friendship among the peoples of the two countries was heartfelt and genuine.

The second factor that affects our bilateral relationship is the reality that Canada is less significant as a global economic player than it was two decades ago. Once our GDP ranked us among the largest national economies. Today many economies in the developing world have grown larger in terms of their aggregate GDP but Canada has, in some ways, become a smaller player even though it has continued to grow. Developing countries and many smaller developed countries are better able to participate in the numerous international forums where once Canada served as a champion of their concerns.

However, it is also true that a significant part of our decline in world affairs is self-inflicted. Canada's military has shrunk so badly that it cannot serve in much more than a symbolic role even in disaster relief efforts around the world. The debate we are having today, in its specific terms of whether or not we should contribute to military effort elsewhere, is largely a symbolic debate. The real concern that many of us have is that our military has declined. That is a concern and it reduces the esteem with which many of our allies hold us around the world.

Our foreign service is shrinking. Our entire public service is losing talented people through attrition and downsizing. We have an excellent diplomatic corps around the world but they are starved for resources and are overwhelmed by the burgeoning number of international talks, commissions and negotiations in which they are asked to be involved.

Supply

●(1105)

At the same time we understand and Washington certainly understands the need for our government not to appear to be acting as puppets to the United States. We understand the ambivalent relationship required of governments in the country as to the position of the United States on a variety of issues. The Prime Minister understands that. At the 1998 NATO meeting he was quoted as saying to the Belgian prime minister "I like to stand up to the Americans. It is popular. But we have to be careful, they are our friends". That is the defining reality of the government's position vis-à-vis the United States.

The government, in many instances, has refused to co-operate with the United States or, on the surface at least, tried to portray itself as standing against U.S. concerns and for Canadian ones. That is fine when those concerns are different concerns but the concerns raised as a consequence of the terrorist acts are not different concerns but relatively the same in both nations.

Historically the United States asked us to address the issues of illegal movement of people across our border, cross border drug smuggling, drug enforcement, light sentences, et cetera. It has also expressed concern about the looseness in our scrutiny over the diversion of sensitive technology to rogue states, as they are sometimes referred. In each of these instances, Canada and the government failed to take proactive approaches which would have addressed the concerns raised by the Americans.

The recent Ressam case highlights the concerns the United States has had with Canada being a transit point or a staging ground for terrorist activity. It is well understood that the Americans have expressed these concerns, not just recently but over a long period of time.

As Her Majesty's loyal opposition, we have proposed solutions to these various problems and others. Refusing to co-operate with an ally does not make one stronger. We share enormous interests with the people of the United States, yet the government's refusal to co-operate with them in so many ways has done nothing to safeguard our sovereignty. On the contrary, it makes us less of a nation.

Working in partnership enhances our influence and our sovereignty. European Union members have already acted to harmonize their approach to terrorism and they did not surrender their sovereignty in the process. Responsible nations around the globe are responding co-operatively to the terrorist threat. The Liberal government seems to be missing the boat on what is a global trend and a global opportunity to focus resources on solving a problem that affects all of us, not just in the free world but those in other areas of the world where terrorists are domiciled as well.

Canadians overwhelmingly agree that we should be fully engaged in the fight against terrorism on all fronts, yet the government seems to oppose any policy simply on the basis that the United States supports it. This is a very dangerous attitude, especially when it is applied to continental security concerns.

We see a number of areas where the government must proceed, such as on immigration reform but not necessarily harmonization. Canadians want us to do a proper job of making sure that terrorists do not use this country as their bed and breakfast. This does not

mean we must do it exactly the same way but we should share good ideas, effective methods and data.

Other areas should include faster and more effective deportation of rejected applicants, intelligence co-ordination, foreign intelligence capability, and safeguards against embassy corruption which is an issue that we raised. There are hundreds of examples of various acts of a criminal nature in our embassies over the last few years but when the issue is raised in the House, the minister dismisses it by saying that it is an exaggeration. However we have data showing that there were over 300 cases between 1993 and 1996. This would be another opportunity for us as a nation to safeguard our perimeter defence; our embassies, after all, are key to that exercise.

Another issue on which the government has taken baby steps is on anti-terrorism legislation. This was debated in the House last week and had the support of my PC colleagues and members of the Alliance. The government's proposal is to limit the ability to give tax receipts to terrorist organizations.

●(1110)

Martin Collacott, a former ambassador and a diplomat for Canada in Asia, calls the proposal laughable. Many Canadians have the same attitude.

Discussions have been absent on emergency preparedness, military defence and homeland defence for the United States. Another issue concerns proactive principal diplomacy. The government's insistence on supporting Syria in its bid to become a member of the United Nations Security Council does not support the idea that Canada's values are being represented by the government.

There are many other areas, such as economic measures, in which we can do a great deal to assist in the battle against terrorism besides the military option we are debating today. The government seems hidebound in its unwillingness to enter into productive partnerships and discussions with our greatest partner in the world. Waiting at the perimeter for the United States to change its mind on these issues will not work. We need to take matters into our own hands. If we fail to do so it will be a recipe for marginalization and anxiety on the part of the Canadian people.

●(1115)

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the Bloc motion today which states:

That this House urge the government, in any reprisals taken in reaction to the terrorist strikes in New York City on September 11, not to commit Canadian armed forces in any offensive action until the House of Commons has been consulted and has voted on the matter.

The Canadian Alliance policy calls for any movement to arms to include a vote in the House of Commons. I would like to look at what the situation is today.

Supply

First, one of our NATO allies has been attacked. Article 5 of the NATO convention states that if there is an attack on any one of the NATO allies, that is considered to be an attack on each of the NATO allies. As a result, the attacks on New York City and Washington, the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania and the attempted attacks on other places are considered to have been attacks on Canada.

The Alliance policy says that before any of our military are sent into action there should be a debate and a vote in the House of Commons. In this case, the debate and the vote which made Canada a member of NATO, would satisfy the Canadian Alliance policy that we have a debate and a vote on sending our forces into action. We have had an attack on an ally and for that reason Canada is considered to be at war. We made that commitment when we signed on to become a NATO partner.

NATO is possibly the greatest military alliance ever in the history of mankind. It has been successful for the 50 some years it has been in existence. NATO has been a great deterrent against those who would attack its members, but also others anywhere in Europe or in North America. The alliance is a good thing and Canada's participation has been essential for our security.

We have had the first direct attack on a NATO ally since the agreement was signed and we need to be there.

I would go a little further with the idea that we need to be there and be available. Just a few minutes ago I asked the minister some direct questions about what Canada would make available, not what we would commit. I was not asking specific questions about any issue that should be kept secret. I was asking specific questions as to what capabilities Canada actually has to contribute to our NATO allies. No answer was forthcoming. The minister said nothing in response to the question except the usual, that we have the Coyotes. Coyotes are light armoured vehicles but a war is not fought with Coyotes.

• (1120)

Coyotes are used to transport our forces from one place to another in battle zones or areas of engagement, but one does not fight a war with them. Yet the minister continually refers to that and does not get much beyond it.

The minister talks about our F-18s. They are still reasonable planes although they are more than 20 years old. They have had upgrades that make them much more capable. They were used fairly successfully in Kosovo. They need substantially more upgrades and some are in the plans. However we need the proper ordinance and we need experienced pilots.

Canada has produced excellent top level pilots. We have top level pilots now, but when we get into a joint operation with other countries we must have experienced pilots. The fact that we have lost well over half our pilots who flew in Kosovo is of great concern.

When we talk about shortages, whether in terms of pilots or others in our forces, the minister says we have a stronger recruitment plan. However we do not recruit pilots one day and have them flying the next. We do not do this anywhere. We certainly do not have them flying in joint operations without years of training.

That is something that has been anticipated. Past defence critics for the Reform Party, Canadian Alliance and other opposition parties have pointed out the shortages of capable and experienced people in our forces.

We have excellent people in our forces. We have very good training in our forces. I do not blame members of the Canadian forces at all. They are doing a great job and I am proud of them. Any time I see a member in uniform I feel pride. I am extremely thankful they are there for us. They are doing a good job and they are top notch. I am proud of that and Canadians across the country should be proud of that.

However our forces need training. They need training not only at the level at which they are receiving it but at a level that will prepare them for the engagement which may happen now and which will certainly happen some time in the future.

We cannot predict exactly when things will happen. However one thing we know is that there will always be people in the world who will attack others. That is human nature. It is the way things happen. It is not a question of if something might happen; it is a question of when.

The first responsibility of the federal government is clearly the safety and security of our citizens and our country. That is the first priority and the first responsibility. It comes ahead of everything else. Has the government given any indication that it understands that responsibility? It has not, and I can point to some quick statistics.

Numbers in the Canadian forces in terms of personnel have dropped from 90,000 to under 55,000. They are on their way down to 42,000 according to the Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies. Does that show an understanding on the part of the government that we need a strong national defence force? I suggest it does not.

Military spending in real terms under the Liberal government has dropped by 30%. Does that show an understanding of or commitment to security and to our largest security force? The Canadian forces is Canada's largest security force.

The auditor general has said that by 2012 we will be \$30 billion short for the equipment replacements we have committed to. In other words, they are not budgeted. That is not the whole story. That is only for equipment already committed to. Does that show a commitment to our national forces? It does not.

The motion the Bloc has brought forth today is worthy of debate. The fact that the minister indicated we should not be talking about procedure right now shows a lack of understanding about the democratic process.

• (1125)

The motion is worthy of debate. I encourage the minister to come up with answers when these questions are asked. How many Canadians believe the capabilities of the Canadian forces are inappropriate? I suggest they want answers.

*Supply**[Translation]*

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to what my colleague from the Canadian Alliance had to say. I would like him to clarify his position regarding article 5 of the NATO Treaty.

At the beginning of his speech, he mentioned that indeed all the countries that are members of NATO—there are 17 or 18 according to who you talk to and it seems that many others want to join in, but let's say there are 18 member countries—have an ambassador to represent them in NATO and so does Canada. When discussions are held, all the ambassadors raise their hands to make their country's position known.

I agree with the member that article 5 says that an attack against one NATO member shall be considered an attack against all its members. However, I would like to remind him that Lord Robertson, the NATO secretary general, clearly specified that this was conditional to the fact that the attack came from the exterior. My point is that it is obvious that an attack like the one in Oklahoma City would not necessarily warrant an action by NATO because the attack came from within.

I would like the member to clarify his position. Once NATO has specified the need to establish that the attack was indeed directed from outside the country, which I think the Americans are about to do, what happens next? Do all countries send in their troops without consulting their parliament? I would like the member to give some clarification on that.

Within NATO, there is a notion called interoperability. It means that nations are capable of performing specific activities in a conflict. As for Canada, we do not yet know what the Americans and NATO expect from us.

However, one thing is certain. If we confirm our participation and if NATO decides to proceed because the attack was indeed directed from outside the country, each nation is bound by article 5 and must say what it is willing to do. That is what the Bloc's motion is all about. Before the Canadian government can say that it wants to do this or that, there must be a vote in the House of Commons. This is not only to the benefit of opposition members, but also to the benefit of Liberal backbenchers, who are accountable to their constituents just like we are. It is on that issue that I would like the member to clarify his position. Does he want us to have a debate and a vote in the House regardless of the type of military assistance that will be requested?

[English]

Mr. Leon Benoit: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. He has attended many of the NATO parliamentarians' meetings over the past years and he understands how NATO works. Article 5 says that if any of the NATO allies is attacked it is considered an attack on all the allies. That would get NATO involved very quickly.

It is up to each NATO country to determine what it will send to a conflict based on what it is capable of and willing to send. The member is right in saying that.

He went on to ask whether parliament should determine, through a debate and a vote, exactly what the contingent would be. I suggest

that parliament should have a debate and a vote on what the contingent would be. I support that. However there are cases where there would not be time for it. That type of situation happens on occasion and we must be prepared to deal with it.

It seems that at the speed the government is moving we would have time for a debate and a vote. Canadians deserve to hear more about what Canada has to offer. It is important not only in terms of specific commitments but so Canadians can know the capability of their largest security force.

Canadians who understand are quite shocked at how little Canada can offer. This is partly because we are overcommitted to NATO and United Nations efforts in various theatres around the world. Canada has taken on a heavy load in NATO commitments to Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia and other places around the world. We are stretched to the limit right now. There is no doubt about it.

● (1130)

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleagues in the Bloc for bringing forward the motion. It gives us an opportunity to debate and discuss the role of parliament in the issue that is now before us as a country and before the world, which is to say the act of terrorism that was perpetrated upon the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11.

I will begin by agreeing with the right hon. leader of the Conservative Party who said this morning by way of a point of order that he felt the Prime Minister should have made a commitment to come into the House of Commons today after his visit to Washington to make a statement with respect to the nature and result of the meeting he had with President Bush.

I hear a Liberal member saying that is what question period is for. This reveals an ignorance of parliamentary tradition. It was quite common in days gone by for prime ministers and ministers to make statements to the House of Commons after significant meetings pertaining to events of significant interest to the House. Certainly the Prime Minister's visit yesterday with President Bush would qualify.

If that does not qualify for a ministerial statement or a prime ministerial statement in this case, what would? It seems that one of the ways the Liberals could make good on their rhetoric of consulting parliament would be to do that kind of thing.

I must say in all fairness to the right hon. member for Calgary Centre that when he was minister of external affairs in the 1980s, during the years when I was his opposition critic, he made use of ministerial statements to involve opposition parties and particularly opposition critics in the ongoing debate about issues as they arose in the area of foreign affairs.

I would echo his demand this morning that the Prime Minister consider doing that later today under routine proceedings and that ministers of the government in general with respect to the issue, when there has been a significant meeting or development, not wait for take note debates or question period which is by its nature sometimes not the most educational forum.

Sometimes a ministerial statement, with a considered response on the part of opposition critics, would serve the Canadian public much better in determining the position of the government and the response of the opposition with respect to particular concerns.

The debate about the role of parliament in this regard is an ongoing debate. Unfortunately any study of the role of parliament when it comes to foreign affairs will find the Canadian parliament and the Canadian parliamentary tradition particularly deficient when it comes to this area of concern.

We in the NDP support the motion and think it would be appropriate that the government come to the House for a debate and a vote before the deployment of Canadian troops or any element of the Canadian armed forces.

With respect to my comment about the deficiency of the Canadian parliamentary tradition in this regard, I am reminded that Canada was the only country of all the NATO countries that did not have a debate in its parliament about the enlargement of NATO.

• (1135)

That was a very significant development with respect to European security architecture and the role of NATO in the world generally. Yet, I believe Canada was the only country out of 15 NATO countries that did not have a debate in its national parliament. I think 13 out of the 15 countries were required by their constitutions to have debate. They have it written into their constitutions or into their political traditions and rules that any such significant decision can only be taken with the advice and consent of their national parliaments.

Even in the U.K., which has the same parliamentary tradition as we do, the government saw fit to have a debate in the house of commons as to the wisdom or lack thereof of enlarging NATO. It was only in Canada that this thing could be passed by order in council without so much as a reference or a whiff of parliamentary involvement. That is wrong and it is something which is fundamentally wrong with our parliamentary tradition.

The Minister of National Defence just a few minutes ago got up in the House and said that this was our practice. Yes, it is our practice, but is it a good practice and is it a practice that the government should consider changing if it is serious about consulting and involving parliament? I would certainly recommend to the government that it take the motion much more seriously than it is.

I recall that at the time the Minister of National Defence cited a number of precedents where recorded votes were not taken on things. However one of the more recent precedents, if he wants to talk about practice, was the gulf war. There was a motion and a vote in the House of Commons. I remember it very well. The government of that day thought it was important to have parliamentary approval, not just a parliamentary discussion but approval, of the action that it took at that time.

If I remember correctly, the Liberals at that time did not object. In fact they probably pushed for it. Here we see the same pattern of inconsistency between what the Liberals ask for and push for when they are in opposition and what they do in government.

Supply

The Minister of National Defence claimed that all the Liberals were abiding by practice. They are abiding by their own practice. They are abiding by the practice that they established. He as much as admitted this when he talked about what the practice had been in the last eight years.

They are abiding by their own practice which they established, which is that all that parliament gets to do is to have these take note debates. I suppose these debates are better than nothing, but perhaps they are not if they establish the false impression that parliament has been consulted in as meaningful a way. I think Canadians would like to think their parliament has in fact been consulted.

To not have a vote is particularly strange. When the minister of defence spoke earlier he said that government had to act and that it was accountable to parliament for its actions. Strangely it would seem that when it comes to these kinds of things, this is the only kind of issue on which the government is not accountable to parliament. Technically speaking, we vote on everything else down to the last jot or tittle of government spending.

We have had before us in the life of the House of Commons many occasions on which to vote on many things, which are infinitely less important and infinitely less grave than a decision by the Canadian government to deploy Canadian armed forces, and in so doing to become involved presumably in some larger effort, whether it is the gulf war or the campaign against terrorism or whatever.

• (1140)

Why is it that on these kinds of issues the Liberals want to argue that we can vote on everything else, but when it comes to something really important forget it? When it comes to something that important, the government reserves the right to make decisions without allowing parliament to express itself in the way that it normally expresses itself. It is not as if the motion calls on the government to do something extraordinary or unusual.

All we are asking for is, when it comes to something like the deployment of the Canadian armed forces, that parliament do what it ordinarily does when it comes to legislative actions taken by the government, which is to have a debate providing an opportunity for individual members of parliament to not just put their views on the record in a take note debate but to vote one way or the other. That is what the motion calls for and that is why we support it.

We support the motion not just for this occasion, but in the context of our overall criticism of the Canadian parliamentary tradition, particularly as it has been practised by the Liberals since 1993, a tradition which has seen the increasing diminution, if it is not a paradox to talk about increasing diminution, of the role of parliament when it comes to foreign affairs and a decreasing use of the House for ministerial and prime ministerial statements. We should not have to rely on question period for an opportunity to deal with these things appropriately.

I also want to say something with respect to what was said by the Alliance members when they were on their feet just before me. They referred to last week's debate on the opposition day motion brought forward by the Alliance. They had a particular take on that debate, which I do not want to let stand unchallenged.

Supply

If I remember correctly, I think the member for Portage—Lisgar said that the Alliance and the Conservatives supported a motion to have the government act on terrorism, the implication being that because the other parties did not support the motion they were not as concerned as those two parties or did not want the government to act or have the committee look at it.

The fact is there were repeated opportunities during that day to try to get the Alliance, and even the Conservatives who were involved in this, to accept that what the House would agree to was to have the whole subject matter of terrorism and the measures needed to combat it referred to the justice committee. Many times people sought unanimous consent on the floor of the House of Commons, myself included, to have the motion before the House withdrawn and to have a different motion put forward that would refer the subject matter of terrorism and what could be done to combat it to the justice committee. The Alliance refused to have that done.

We should not play those kinds of games as to who cares more, but they mentioned it. I want to set the record straight that there was unanimity in the House with respect to the need for referring that matter to the justice committee. There was no unanimity on the list of measures which the Alliance attached to their motion, which by so doing had predetermined in a way that was unacceptable to at least three other opposition parties what the committee would discuss or what the outcome of the committee process would be.

I wanted to make clear what happened last week. There was some divergence of fact between what the member for Portage—Lisgar reported to the House and what actually happened.

● (1145)

Having said that, I would like to reiterate that we support the motion. We think there should be more and better involvement of parliament in these decisions. It was not an accident that I said more and better involvement of parliament because if the government is to take parliament into its confidence and deal with it in a way that is more appropriate and more inclusive than what it has in the last eight years under the Liberals, then there is also responsibility on the part of members of parliament to reciprocate and to not look for opportunities to score cheap political points on the government in debates about matters this serious.

Again, I think of my Alliance colleagues in this respect. It seems to me that if we listened to them we would think that everything that happened in New York and in Washington on September 11 was somehow Canada's fault. As far as we know, these terrorists, by and large, were living in the United States. They were training in the United States to do these things. It is unfortunate that the intelligence community in the United States and in Canada were not able to determine what was going on and do something about it. However, it is not a failure of Canada any more than it is a failure of the United States and everyone else who is involved. Why this self-loathing by which it somehow becomes Canada's fault that it happened?

There are things we could do better. It is fair on the part of the Alliance members to point to out that there are things they asked for in the past that might not have been done. Why are they not bad-mouthing the United States administration for all the things that it did not do up until now? They may say it is because they are the opposition here and not there.

However, the fact remains that what is needed here is not to grind political axes but to identify the problem and suggest ways in which the government could improve upon its policies with respect to things that would prevent terrorism. That is certainly what I would urge all members of the House to do.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona for his very thoughtful comments and for pointing out the reasons why the New Democratic Party is supporting the Bloc motion today.

I do not know about other members, but it strikes me that since September 11, probably 99% of the letters, the e-mails and the phone calls that I have received from people in my constituency of Vancouver East, as well as across the country, have been on the critical issue of what happened on September 11. People are terribly concerned about the attacks that took place, the loss of life and what impact that has had on families and people of the United States. They are also concerned about what the response will be.

It strikes me that there is an assumption out there, a legitimate belief by the people of Canada, that it will be the members of parliament who will not only debate the issue, if Canada is to be involved in sending Canadian troops as part of some sort of effort, but who will also vote in the House. I think people believe that. It is quite astounding that when the debate unfolds, people will realize that even members of parliament have not been meaningfully involved in that kind of process.

The indications are, from what we have heard so far, that the government may not abide by that true tradition of parliamentary practice and democracy of ensuring that members voices are heard so that we can reflect the views of our constituents.

I appreciate the member for Winnipeg—Transcona for giving some historical lessons about how far we have come in terms of our own practices, particularly under the Liberal government and what it sees as its own practice versus the need to sustain democracy in this very environment.

At what point did this change begin to take place? He outlined how during the gulf war there was a vote in the House. Now, 10 years later, we are at a point where we are debating whether or not members will have a voice that really counts in terms of a vote. Could the member comment on that?

● (1150)

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Madam Speaker, answering the last question first, it changed with the Liberals. Respect is due to the Conservatives for the fact that there was a vote in the House on the Gulf war. I do not remember the exact context of that day or what other reasons there may have been, but the fact of the matter is that the House of Commons was consulted in a more meaningful way. That should stand as a precedent which the House should follow, but it is clear that the Liberals do not accept that.

Supply

The minister of defence in his speech today talked about the practice of the last eight years. It is clear that the Liberals have a different view of what the role of parliament is with regard to this issue. The minister of defence said that this was a hypothetical situation. We agree and we hope that the House is never faced with such a question. However it is certainly not out of order for us to discuss what the appropriate process should be if in fact certain things happen in the future.

The minister also asked what would happen if we had to act quickly and the House was not sitting. There would be opportunities even after the fact for the House to say whether or not it approved. It seems to me that the Liberals are just backing and filling and not being honest with us which is to say they are not telling us that it is their policy to exclude the House of Commons from voting on very important matters when they are quite content to have us vote on all kinds of other things.

The member said that Canadians expect it of their members of parliament. It would be very hard to explain to constituents the fact that we get to vote on *a, b, c, d* and *e*, but when it comes to something really important, we do not get to vote on it. When it comes to something really important, Canadians would expect their members of parliament to have a chance to vote on it. It is one of the ongoing mysteries of Canadian parliamentary tradition that we do not.

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the member comments on some partisan comments from other parties in the House and goes on to make the most partisan statements I have heard on this issue in the House. Sometimes I cannot figure this place out.

The member referred to the opposition day motion and that he could not support it due to some specific points. I would like to remind him what this motion said. It stated:

That this House call upon the government to introduce anti-terrorism legislation similar in principle to the United Kingdom's Terrorism Act, 2000, and that such legislation provide for:

- the naming of all known international terrorist organizations operating in Canada;
- a complete ban on fundraising activities in support of terrorism, and provisions for the seizure of assets belonging to terrorists or terrorist organizations;
- the immediate ratification of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism;

I do not know which of those things the member found difficult to support. The motion continues:

- the creation of specific crimes for engaging in terrorist training—

I do not know why he would have a problem with that.

- the prompt extradition of foreign nationals charged with acts of terrorism—

Is there a problem with that? I cannot really see why.

- the detention and deportation to their country of origin of any people illegally in Canada or failed refugee claimants who have been linked to terrorist organizations.

The member for Winnipeg—Transcona said that he could not support the motion because of the specifics we attached to it. They are very broad items that should be included in legislation. I would like to know exactly which of those points the member felt he could not support and which led him to vote against our supply day motion.

• (1155)

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I spoke at some length on this last week in the House. I would refer the hon. member to *Hansard* if he wanted an answer in any great detail as to what we found wrong with the motion.

I do not think these circumstances should cause us to throw away our normal practice. Good procedural arguments are still in order even under the circumstances which prevail now. One of the things I found wrong with the motion was that it called upon us to accept in principle a piece of legislation, that is to say the legislation in the United Kingdom, which we did not have before us.

Our procedure is that at second reading debate, which is a debate in principle, we have the legislation before us. The Alliance was asking us to accept something in principle that we did not even have before us. I found that particularly objectionable on procedural grounds.

There may well be things in the list with which we agree and other things about which we have concerns, but the fact of the matter is that it was presented in a way which was open to the charge of political grandstanding. That is a charge which could have been ameliorated over the course of the day if the Alliance members had been willing to accept the repeated requests by members of the House to refer the subject matter to a committee so that today the justice committee could be meeting to talk about it. But no, it was their way or the highway.

The Alliance has to take responsibility for the fact that there is, at the moment at least, no process in train for a House of Commons committee to look at the matters that it said were of such serious importance. I agree they are of importance. That is why we and others sought to get the matter referred to committee.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I had two questions, but I will ask just one. I listened carefully to the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona, and I would like him to comment on the democratic deficit he talked about at the beginning of his remarks.

After his trip to the United States, Tony Blair went back to the U.K. and explained the situation to his ministers and to opposition members. He is even thinking of reconvening parliament because this is a crisis situation.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister of Canada met with the president of the United States, and he chose to make his first report to a group of Liberal partisans at a fundraiser.

For those who care about democracy, is that not another proof that all decisions are made by the Prime Minister's office and the cabinet, and that Liberal backbenchers do not have their say?

Supply

•(1200)

[English]

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I would agree with the process followed by Prime Minister Blair in terms of consulting with, making speeches and reporting to the British House of Commons. I will take the member's word for it if after his trip to Washington he reported to the House of Commons, that is something that could have been emulated by our Prime Minister.

I want to make it clear that I do not completely agree with everything Prime Minister Blair of the United Kingdom has said with respect to the events in New York and Washington. However, in terms of the relationship between the executive and the House of Commons and reporting to and involving the House of Commons, the British tradition is superior to the Canadian tradition. I referred to that earlier when I said that even though it was not required to do so, the British House of Commons was given the opportunity to debate the enlargement of NATO which is not something this House was given the opportunity to do.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC/DR): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the motion. It is my privilege to share my time with the very distinguished member for Edmonton North.

It is interesting that today we are talking about the process of engaging our military in an offensive action. It is incredible that we are at this point but reality deems that is what we have to do and it is what we will do.

We support the government's involvement in military actions if that is what it takes. We totally support it. It is our tradition as a country and it is our obligation as a country. Even though Canada is not where the terrorism acts occurred, Canadians were victims. Our economic and transportation systems were also impacted. It is very clearly our obligation to participate.

It is our obligation to involve the armed forces but it is also our obligation as parliamentarians to participate and do our job. If we are asking the military to do its job, we must do our job. That includes voting on the decision on how the armed forces will be committed, how they will be put in harm's way and put at risk. We did our job in the gulf war. At that time we met, debated and voted on that issue, on whether or not our armed forces would participate in the conflict. We should do it now. It is simply our job and our obligation.

As politicians we have an obligation as well to the people in the military, the people whom we will ask to do that job, the people who will fight for us and represent us, and who will maybe risk their lives in Afghanistan. We have an obligation to those people. That obligation is to find alternatives to military action. Military action should be the last action. We have an obligation to do everything we can to find alternatives. That includes exploring economic avenues to resolve these issues. It includes diplomacy. Diplomacy is a key role for us as parliamentarians and politicians.

I want to give an example of a diplomatic effort that has great promise but is now at risk. It is called the Halifax peace forum. The process evolved after several meetings with Palestinian and Israeli diplomats in Canada. Both sides repeatedly said that Canada is in a unique position to help. We are respected on both sides. We are seen

as objective and we can do a lot to bring these two parties together in the Middle East. We can build bridges and open lines of communication that are not there now and never have been. From that recommendation by the Palestinians and the Israeli diplomats to Canada, a plan evolved to bring six members of the Israeli Knesset and six members of the Palestinian legislature to Canada to meet with Canadian members of parliament.

The meeting was established. Everyone had agreed to it and it was set to go in Halifax. We had the co-operation of individuals who donated time, money and volunteers. We had groups representing people with Israeli, Jewish, Muslim and Arab backgrounds. Businesses were prepared to contribute goods, services and money. We had the co-operation of the municipal, provincial and federal governments. Even the archbishop of the Catholic church agreed to hold a joint reception for all cultures at Halifax city hall during the forum which was to take place on October 14.

As a result of all this activity the member for Toronto Centre—Rosedale and I joined with a group of MPs from all parties to put the plan together and bring the members of the three jurisdictions together. All sides have agreed and committed. Even as late as this morning diplomats from both sides indicated their strong support and desire to have the forum go forward. They and many other people say now it is more necessary than ever. I read a passage in the *Globe and Mail* this morning which said: "You must talk to each other, and the sooner the better. That has been the repeated message to the Israeli and Palestinian leadership from U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and yesterday by the British foreign secretary and by the French foreign minister".

It is evident and obvious that the Palestinians and the Israelis must talk now. However, last night the Government of Nova Scotia asked us not to proceed with the forum at this time. We must understand that Halifax just experienced an onslaught of 10,000 unexpected visitors which strained its system, its emergency measures and every other aspect of it.

We respect their request to not proceed in Halifax but it does not reduce or eliminate the need for this forum. We want it to proceed, even if we have to move it.

•(1205)

It appears that the only way we can proceed now is to move the process to Ottawa. Ottawa is appropriate under the circumstances since September 11. Security is well established here. There is an RCMP presence everywhere on the Hill. CSIS is close by, as is the Hill's own security service. In Ottawa the security measures organizations are familiar with the challenges of state visits and high risk visitors under strained situations. The RCMP, CSIS and Hill security are right here on the spot.

Supply

Over the next few days we will be asking the government to assist us in moving the process, the Halifax peace forum, to Ottawa. I want to point out that this is parliament to parliament, not government to government. The minister and the department have been totally supportive and co-operative. They have helped us bring this together. Without their help we could not have done it to this point. Now we are making a last minute request to them to help us move the process to Ottawa.

At this time when we are asking our military forces to participate and to perhaps risk their lives, we as politicians must take action to find alternatives and this is an excellent way to do that. We only need help with facilities, logistics and arrangements. I am sure the government can help us although it has helped us in every way it can until now. As parliamentarians we are today debating sending the youngest and the best of the armed forces into harm's way. We owe it to the people of Halifax, Shearwater and Greenwood and to people all across the country to use every diplomatic and economic strategy that we can come up with.

The peace forum is a very modest initiative which will be unique and will open lines of communication and build bridges that are not available now and never have been. If it is to proceed we need the support of all members of parliament and the government. I want to emphasize that this is parliament to parliament, not government to government, and it is a last minute request.

It is just simply our job. We are asking the military to do its job and we must do our job. We must vote on the bill and we must take every step we can to find alternatives to military action.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I apologize to my colleague for missing the beginning of his speech, but from the time I did arrive in the House until the end of his speech, I got the impression that what he was seeking above all was for politicians to be able to find some means other than military intervention and for us to address this issue in response to a proposal from the government of Nova Scotia.

What I would like to remind him, however, and I hope he will take advantage of the response to perhaps provide a more detailed explanation of the part of his speech that I missed, is that the proposal before us at this time is the following:

If Ottawa decides to send troops to provide support or assistance in connection with the events of September 11, we do not want this to be done without a discussion and vote involving each member of the House of Commons.

That is the purpose of the motion before us today. Perhaps he could explain to me what he said in the first part about his peace plan, about politicians having to do their bit. Despite my assignment as defence critic I am basically a pacifist. Above all else, I want us to be able to solve the September 11 problem and the fallout from it in a peaceful manner.

I fear, however, and this is what we need to be prepared for, that if ever there is an American response and the Americans ask us for military assistance, we will need to know what action to take.

What we in the Bloc Québécois want to avoid, and what is addressed by our motion, is that the Prime Minister and the cabinet alone will decide on behalf of all Canadians and all Quebecers. What we want is not just a discussion in the House, but a vote as well.

I would therefore like to know from my colleague what he thinks of the Bloc Québécois motion.

• (1210)

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Casey: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I did say at the very beginning that we support the motion. We should do our job. It is part of our job to vote on these issues and I did take the opportunity to explain the peace forum. The Bloc member on our peace forum steering committee has been one of the most knowledgeable, effective and interested members of parliament on the committee.

I would like to read from *Hansard* of September 24, 1990, in government orders, in which the right hon. member for Calgary Centre moved the following motion:

That this House condemn the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq and, encouraged by the unprecedented international consensus demanding the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait—

Basically there was a motion before the House in 1990, which we voted on, as to whether we should or should not put our forces in harm's way. We did our job then. We should do it now.

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, first let me commend the member for Cumberland—Colchester for his initiative with respect to the peace forum. I know that there was a blending of the two issues: the diplomacy that we as members of parliament should be looking at and working toward in order to try to resolve some of the issues of our globe today and, however, I know the member also has some strong feelings with respect to the motion before us today.

I have a question for the hon. member. He quoted a motion that was put forward in September 1990 by the then government, the Conservative government of Brian Mulroney. The right hon. member for Calgary Centre was instrumental in that. In fact it was a very transparent process. There was debate and there were briefings within the House and the member was a part of that.

Is it the member's opinion that the reason why that is not happening now is that the government of the day feels that it in fact has all of the answers and does not have to bring to the Chamber the debate and the necessity to ask for support from the opposition members for any types of actions that may go forward with respect to troops being put into the Middle East? Is it the philosophical mindset of the government that it does not need any other information from any members of the opposition?

The Deputy Speaker: I can do only so much in terms of giving signals, but if colleagues want other members to give responses I would hope that the questions would be short, particularly when time is divided into 10 minute and 5 minute slots. It becomes a little congested.

Supply

Mr. Bill Casey: Mr. Speaker, I honestly cannot answer for how they think or what they do on the government side. I was here in 1990 and you were as well, Mr. Speaker. I will read the last line of that motion, which stated:

—for the despatch of members of the Canadian Forces to take part in the multinational military effort in and around the Arabian Peninsula—

You and I, Mr. Speaker, both had the chance to vote on that motion. We should have the chance to vote on any future military action.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, the entire world is gripped by the events of the last couple of weeks and how we were all horrified. Every one of us will remember for the rest of our lives where we were, who we spoke with first and these kinds of things. This was a world changing event.

Although you and I, Mr. Speaker, were here in 1991 when the gulf war occurred, and it certainly was a frightening time as well, it seems to me that this is perhaps the culmination of many of those events. We are able to have the privilege to be here in this country as well as the responsibility, and not just to participate in take note debates. This is a whole lot bigger than just that. The world has changed permanently because of what happened and because of the events in New York a couple of weeks ago. I do believe that take note debates just will not be good enough.

If we look at what is going on in the United States, George W. Bush is not just saying “let us take note” of something. This parliament should be seized with what we can actually do rather than just taking note, and what we do here is vote. That is part of our job and our responsibility.

My colleague just said how important it is. If we are calling on the military to do its job, then so should we be doing our job, and our job is to vote on and participate in this. Whether the government thinks it has all the answers or does not need a whole lot of input is immaterial right now. It is absolutely immaterial.

If I were on the government side, I would want to know that I had the safety, the security and the blessing of all hon. members of the House because in numbers is that strength with which we are all able to go forward.

If we just look at the idea that we do not really need to vote on it, and the minister this morning said we do not really know if the House of Commons will be sitting at such a time, that is just inane. Surely we could think ahead on something. So much of what has happened over the last couple of weeks is due to us thinking ahead a little bit, but not a whole lot. We have had clues. We had ideas as to what could happen in some of these attacks. No one could have guessed it would happen on that day or in that way, but we should all sharpen up and be ready “in the event of”, because there are enough clues coming forward. It is no surprise now that something will happen.

My colleague talked about this amazing initiative that he has undertaken and will continue to participate in, the peace forum. What a great idea that is: to look at diplomatic ways to ensure that military force will be used only as a last resort.

The government, especially in the United States yesterday, talked about the wisdom of economic sanctions or cutting off the taps of

amazing amounts of profit flowing to these groups. That is a good thing, to look at economic freeze out and the diplomatic moves we can make, but it seems to me that it is evident and inevitable that sooner or later there will have to be some use of military force. Why is the government not thinking ahead on this thing, saying that if such and such happens then let us be ready and let us have the umbrella, strength and protection of this place to be able to move forward and move forward agreed on how important it is?

In regard to the idea of take note debates like we saw last Monday, where it was not voted on, the Alliance then brought forward a motion which I thought was very good. On Tuesday it was voted on but defeated. We just have to wonder how forward looking the House of Commons is.

When I said earlier that voting is what we do here, that is part of our job and our responsibility. A vote is nothing more than standing up and being counted on something. People participate like that in elections. In the House people participate like that on behalf of their constituents.

I am amazed when I talk to people on the streets or in coffee shops or whatever. Everyone is horrified.

● (1215)

A common question we are being asked is what we will do about it. The government says it is taking action. We try to appreciate that in the fullest sense of the word. Receiving an endorsement from parliament for any kind of action is the number one step. I do not know for what reasons that is not happening,

During the gulf war crisis the member who spoke before me and I were both here at the time. We remember it as a very frightening time. He alluded to the fact that we talked about it several times in the House of Commons.

On October 23, 1990, the House passed a motion condemning Kuwait. On November 28 and 29 the second motion was brought forward. War was declared on January 16, the very evening I was to give my speech. It was a huge shock for the entire world that war had been declared. Later that week the second motion was passed

Partisanship politics is so ridiculous and unnecessary at a time like this. It is sad to watch. My colleague talked about the forum and quoted from the *Globe and Mail* where it said, and I agree 100%, that “we must talk to each other”.

In this place we talk through each other, we talk past each other, or we make some grandiose statement thinking that was wonderful and maybe we will be on the news tonight. We must talk to each other, not just in this place but at home and on the news.

We must talk to each other, those of us in Canada with those in the United States. It could have easily happened here and we are afraid to say that it might because they will not strike the same place twice in the same manner. We need to be thinking ahead.

Supply

When we get our brains together and begin to really talk to each other, that will be the most important message that comes out of this. Let us look at Mayor Giuliani of New York and the amazing turnaround in that man's life over the last six months. What is he doing? He is talking to people. He is at ground zero holding press conferences and keeping people up to date. He has done a marvellous job, simply because he is talking to people. That more than anything else will be the lesson we need to learn from this.

If this was an important issue to parliament in the past it should be important again. In 1994 the special joint committee on Canada's defence policy issued a report entitled "Security in a changing world". Is that not a prophetic title? We have a changing world now or a changed world, and we need security to the maximum. There were recommendations made concerning the role of parliament. At page 58 the committee noted:

At the time of the Gulf War, for example, the government of the day introduced and debated a motion regarding the deployment of our forces to the combat theatre.

Not a whole lot has changed in the ensuing years in terms of how important that committee report was under a Liberal government. We need to make sure that we are together on the deployment of forces. The government would be very wise not to spurn this. We need to come before parliament. We need the strength and security of all of us working together in a non-partisan way.

• (1220)

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Edmonton North mentioned a question within the context of her fine address in which she asked what we were doing about it. No matter where one lived in Canada what happened on September 11 affected people in different ways. In the Toronto *Star* there was a section which showed people at one of the ports of entry in my constituency, North Portal, where the golf course has different holes on different sides of the border.

I will describe to the hon. member the fear of people in my constituency that has nine border crossings. I do not believe any other member's constituency has as many. If someone intends to escape from Canada and get by U.S. customs, the border patrol, the highway patrol and the county forces are notified. When it is the reverse and someone is coming back into Canada, many of these nine border crossings do not have an RCMP detachment for 25 or 30 miles and the RCMP may be at another scene. We have no means of stopping anyone. The people in my constituency are becoming very nervous about the border situation.

Would the hon. member not agree that national security goes beyond the deployment of troops, that it goes beyond other items within our society?

• (1225)

Miss Deborah Grey: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent point. Military force should be used as a last resort, but there are many things that we could and should be doing before that.

Tightening our border crossings is essential. Part of the friendship we enjoy with the United States is free and full access back and forth. In times like these when there are people who live along those borders, it is essential to make sure that we have very strong and secure borders.

I noticed in today's newspaper that after its 1993 election victory the Liberal government cancelled a high level and high powered security agency that was to do something good and practical. When all a person needs to do when crossing a border is to sign up for tee time at the golf course through North Portal, surely there is more to it than that.

We need more than the minister responsible for CCRA ranting in the House about what a great job it is doing when people are living in fear near border crossings across our country. They are concerned about how easy it is to get into Canada and how difficult it is to get into the United States. We must work together on that.

That is something concrete the government could, should and must do to say that it has taken action by tightening up that border crossing. That is something the government can point to and be proud of when it says that it has at least made some difference and has taken some action in this regard.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to what my colleague from Edmonton North had to say. I have a great deal of admiration for her as she has had considerable experience in the House. She was elected in 1990 or 1991 and has taken part in numerous debates.

Essentially, my question is about the motion tabled by the Bloc Québécois. Does she not believe that it is important for all members of the House, on a subject as critical as deciding to send men and women into a high-risk theatre of operations, to have an opportunity not only to debate the issue, but also to vote on it?

I would like to know from her if it is just as important, in her opinion, for Liberal backbenchers.

[*English*]

Miss Deborah Grey: Mr. Speaker, I was elected in March 1989 in a byelection. I have been in the House almost 13 years now. A great deal of my speech was given to the fact that the reason we are here is to vote.

I do not mean that opposition members are here only to give endorsements or whatever. It is for government members as well to tell their people back home, if nothing else, that they did something: they acted on it and they voted. The reason we are sent to the House of Commons is to vote. That is the important point.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Roberval today introduced a motion which this House is debating as part of an emergency debate. I would like to show Quebecers, the people watching us today, why, on Tuesday, September 25, we are having a debate of such urgency with respect to a situation that has gone on for nearly two weeks now and why the Bloc Québécois felt compelled to demand this debate in the House so that members, regardless of their affiliation, may vote on a situation of such importance.

I would like to reread the motion with the amendment by the member for Saint—Jean:

Supply

That this House urge the government, in any reprisals taken in reaction to the terrorist strikes in New York City on September 11, not to commit Canadian armed forces in any offensive action nor any financial resources until the House of Commons has been consulted and has voted on the matter.

The moment the House resumed sitting on September 17, the Bloc Québécois drew to the attention of the Prime Minister the need for members, who are the representatives of the people, to have an opportunity to vote on such an important decision. Here again is the question my BQ colleague and member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie put to the Prime Minister during oral question period. It reads as follows:

Mr. Speaker, the House was consulted after the decision had been made or without a vote.

I ask the Prime Minister if they could do a little more, ensure that all parliamentarians exercise their responsibility, and have the House vote on the government's proposal when the time comes to make a commitment, even a military one.

This was the question put by the leader of the Bloc Québécois. The Prime Minister's answer reads as follows:

Mr. Speaker, the House of Commons is consulted. The House of Commons speaks. The members of all parties may have their say, and a consensus is expressed at that point.

This is the procedure that has always been followed. I do not see why we should change it under the circumstances, but we will see. If it needs changing, we will change it.

On the strength of this statement by the Prime Minister, the representatives of the Bloc Québécois have always thought that the Government of Canada supported it. In view of the urgency of the situation and regardless of the military and economic decisions Canada has had to make in the past, today we have a threat on our doorstep. From what the Prime Minister says, the terrorists could even be inside our country.

We are faced with an emergency situation. Canada's whole economic, democratic and parliamentary systems, not to mention provincial institutions in Quebec and in the other Canadian provinces, are jeopardized by unscrupulous people.

The situation is an urgent one and this is why the Bloc Québécois wants members of this House to have a say. We represent constituents who every day have to put up with the problems posed by this major terrorist crisis. This crisis first affected our American neighbours but, as we can see on a daily basis, it is also affecting us from an economic point of view. There have been layoffs in the airline industry and we can see what is happening with the aircraft parts industry. There is a domino effect. We know what companies are going to announce Pratt & Whitney has already made such an announcement while Bombardier is rethinking its investment strategy.

We are finding out that this terrorist attack has a lot more impact than one would think on Canadian and Quebec industry. Therefore, it is only normal that constituents send messages to their members of parliament so that they can represent them in this House, ask questions and, more important make decisions and vote on the issues.

I agree with my colleagues that we are not here merely to make speeches. We are also here, and this includes both opposition and government members, to make decisions and to vote.

At this point I wish to inform the Chair that, from now on, all Bloc Québécois members will share their time.

This is an urgent situation. On behalf of our constituents, we are asking for an emergency debate on two major types of action. The Bloc Québécois is asking the government for a vote to be held on any military intervention that could endanger the lives of Quebecers and Canadians, and on any amount that could be spent on protection, armaments and required actions.

● (1230)

There is always money involved. We understood that quite clearly when the leader of the Bloc Québécois put the question to the Prime Minister on September 17. There will be decisions made. As I explained earlier, even the Prime Minister raised the possibility of reviewing that practice, what was acceptable and in order.

The American congress voted on the amounts to be devoted to military strikes and interventions. Those who voted were elected representatives, our neighbours, those who were suffering through this terrible situation and who were victims of this brutal and inhumane attack. Nonetheless, this whole situation is happening on our doorstep, in the neighbouring country. I take this opportunity to express my most sincere sympathy

At this very instant we even think, the Prime Minister himself said it, that there could be terrorists on our own territory. It is not too late. History will determine if we were efficient and if we were taken seriously. More and more observers think that Canada is not being taken seriously because of the way it reacted to this crisis. However, history will be the judge of that.

Except we, as members of parliament representing our constituents, must make the right decisions for them. We must, and the Bloc Québécois felt obligated to raise this debate, agree to this motion so that all the citizens of Quebec and of the rest of Canada fully realize that this is very important. In such a serious situation that may affect us, even within the borders of our provinces and of Canada, we should be able to make informed decisions. Most of all the members of parliament who the citizens have elected to represent them in the House should be able to vote on the issue.

It is the hand, the olive branch that the Bloc Québécois is holding out to the Liberal government. We have acted quite responsibly and we have been able to respond by supporting the government when the time came to make some decisions in this crisis. In such serious situations that may affect the lives of Quebecers and Canadians who are in the military and who might be sent overseas during the strikes or that may affect the budgets, our citizens' money, perhaps it is time for the government to think about the important monetary decisions that imply major investments, sums of money that will be allocated to counter the effects of terrorism.

We are asking the government, both in the amendment and in the main motion, for a vote to be held in the House. That is not asking too much and it is reasonable, given the situation and the gravity of this crisis, that the government take another look at its approach. All the more so because when it was in opposition, the Liberal Party questioned the government's position in its interventions during the gulf crisis. An amendment was moved by the current Deputy Prime Minister, then in the opposition. This amendment referred to military support for operations in the gulf, and read as follows:

That this support shall not be interpreted as approval of the use of Canadian Forces for offensive action without further consultation with and approval by this House.

This was what the Deputy Prime Minister, then in the opposition, had to say. In his speech in support of his amendment, he said, and I quote:

Liberals insist that before Canadians are called upon to participate in any offensive action, such participation must first be brought before Parliament and voted on here in the way it was done at the time of the Korean conflict.

These were the terms used by the Deputy Prime Minister, an important and influential minister and an influential member of the Liberal Party. Why is the Liberal Party, which is now in power, applying a double standard at such a serious time? The Minister of National Defence went through Canada's involvement in all the conflicts worldwide. The fact remains that we are now facing an urgent situation following a serious attack perpetrated on our American neighbours which threatens us on our own territory.

● (1235)

This is a situation which is unique in the history of Canada and, obviously, of Quebec as well. It calls for unique action by parliamentarians and a vote in the House.

[*English*]

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from the Bloc for a very interesting speech. There is no question in my mind that I concur that these matters should be dealt with in the House of Commons. We should be given the opportunity to have our say and to vote on many aspects of the incidents stemming from the tragedy on September 11.

I would like the hon. member to expand on something he mentioned, which is the impact this catastrophic event has had on jobs. I speak of workers in the airline industry, the aerospace industry and even beyond those industries and into the hospitality industry as well as taxi drivers. The taxi driver who brought me here from the airport told me that he had three fares that day from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. when I was picked up. These people do not have anything to fall back on in terms of EI or many of the other benefits that other workers might have if they found themselves temporarily unemployed.

Would the hon. member agree that one of the things we in the House should be contemplating is an emergency measures package for workers impacted by this catastrophic event with special emphasis on those workers who do not have access to EI? Would he see fit to temporarily amend the EI Act and use some of the overwhelming surplus in the EI fund to offset the impact that this catastrophic event is having on workers such as taxi drivers and part time employees in the hospitality industry?

Supply

● (1240)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Laframboise: Mr. Speaker, in answer to my colleague's question, I will give the example of Quebec, though any other region of Canada could be referred to.

In terms of avionics, aerospace and aeronautics, Quebec has become a major player. The Greater Montreal area is now considered to be, after Toulouse, the second largest focal point for this type of industry in the world.

Needless to say, the fact that Canadians and people around the world refuse to or are afraid of flying has tragic consequences on the industry as a whole, not only the travel industry, travel agencies and airline industries which are directly hit, but all those who support that industry, namely aircraft producers and manufacturers.

In the United States Boeing has made some important decisions. Bombardier will do the same in the days to come. They are going through a process of analysis. Of course, it also concerns companies manufacturing airplane parts and there are many in Canada.

In terms of the domino effect, the avionics industry is directly linked to international tourism. My colleague clearly understands that there are communities and territories which rely largely on international tourism, which is the case of Mont-Tremblant in Quebec and many other areas in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada. Such areas depend on great numbers of international tourists coming to our regions, and those people have cancelled their reservations throughout the hotel and restaurant network.

Because of the domino effect to which my colleague was referring, the taxi industry is also affected. It is a huge operation. Appropriate funds will have to be committed, because if we accept the complete annihilation of that part of the Canadian avionics industry, airlines and international tourism, the terrorists will have won. Though they may not have anticipated it, the terrorists must certainly be happy that their attacks have almost completely paralyzed the airlines industry as a whole and international tourism.

We will need spending and emergency budgets which, I hope, will urgently be voted by the House. As the Minister of National Defence said, the issue is a somewhat complex one because often parliament is not sitting. However, I am convinced that not a single member of parliament would refuse to participate in an emergency debate followed by a vote, even if parliament had to be called back to Ottawa to debate an emergency situation concerning all of Canada.

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 14 days ago today some barbarians, some crackpots undertook and carried out the biggest terrorist attack in history. The shock is past, but the pain is still present. The shock is past, but the anger is still present. The shock is past, but emotions are still present.

Supply

When a close friend, a neighbour, a fellow member of the great family of western civilization is affected in this way, we cannot remain indifferent. No one here in this House is indifferent. All of us who have been democratically elected to represent the people of Quebec and Canada have a duty to speak our minds on the matter placed on the order paper by the Bloc Québécois today.

As has been said many times, it is not just the U.S. that has been affected, but all of the so-called liberal democracies, liberal in the philosophical meaning of the word of course, have been attacked. The first response to this murderous attack, as democracies, is to show the strength of the democratic system, the power of the democratic system and the attraction of living within democratic societies because of their intrinsic values.

In the past certain people have thought they could take advantage of what they perceived to be the weakness of democracies. They saw them as weak and ready to crumble. They have paid dearly for this.

Now, we must not only make use of this crisis to continue our democratic practices but, I respectfully submit, we must also make use of the situation, of these troubled times, to improve our democratic institutions, to make them better, to ensure that the public, the nations of Quebec and Canada and their citizens may feel that they are involved in every decision that has to be taken.

One way of doing so is the one proposed today by the Bloc Québécois, which is to ensure that parliament is even more closely associated with important decisions, with the fundamental and crucial decisions that will have to be reached here.

In the event of military action by the Canadian forces, the lives of young men and women from Quebec and Canada will be affected. Each of us in this House will have to carefully ponder the consequences of such a decision. There is no decision more important for an elected assembly in any country than the decision to send or not to send its young people to face the rigours and the dangers of a military conflict. That is the main reason it is necessary, essential and fundamental to involve the elected members of this House in such a decision.

•(1245)

What will and must be decided concerns not only the future of Quebec and Canada but also the future of the whole planet. Therefore, every member of this House ought to be involved in it. That is not only for the philosophical reasons I stated earlier but also for reasons of *realpolitik*.

The Prime Minister would have tremendous clout if, when he goes to meet with the leaders of the Commonwealth and those of the Francophonie, he had the support not only of cabinet and the Liberal Party, the government party in Canada, but also of this House.

Such support would give him much greater clout in the positions he would be called on to defend internationally. It would ensure that Canada is listened to even more than it is now, and God knows that it is not always listened to as much as some would claim.

By doing so, Canada would not be a leader, unfortunately, but it would only be following the normal and necessary course in a democratic society and institution. There are several examples.

There is the case of Argentina. There is also the case of France, where the prime minister, Lionel Jospin, stated that should it become necessary to make commitments on France's behalf, the executive could not make them without consulting the national assembly and the Senate.

In England, Tony Blair recalled parliament a few hours after the deadly attacks. After meeting with U.S. president George W. Bush, he travelled to Brussels to report to his colleagues, heads of state and heads of government, within the European Union. Upon returning to London, he asked to meet not only with members of the labour party, the governing party, but also with the leaders of the opposition parties.

This motion is based on the kind of common sense shown by the Liberals on this issue when they were in opposition. My colleague, the member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel said it well. At that time, the current Deputy Prime Minister, then leader of the Liberal opposition in the House of Commons, insisted that the House vote before troops were sent to take part in the gulf war.

I urge all my colleagues in the House, particularly my Liberal colleagues with whom I have had the opportunity to exchange views and who are very concerned with the present situation, and rightly so, to support this motion.

This motion rises above any partisan considerations and is aimed at ensuring the broadest consensus possible with regard to Canada's response, that is the response of Quebecers and Canadians, to the murderous attacks in Washington and New York. We must show the whole world that a democracy such as the one we have in Quebec and in Canada is the strongest system of government and that it will resist the deadly attacks perpetrated against all democracies on September 11.

•(1250)

Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, of course I commend my colleague for his speech. Earlier we heard the Minister of National Defence say something really incredible. I do not know if he is going through or listening to the same things as we are since September 11, but he is talking about a hypothetical situation.

He is taking only one fact, that is whether military personnel are being sent to one specific location. This is the only hypothetical question. The Americans have already deployed military personnel. Yesterday, Great Britain also deployed military personnel.

I find it incredible that we are being told that the situation is hypothetical. We are not in a hypothetical situation. From what we are seeing, we are probably in a war.

I would therefore like to ask my colleague this question. The Argentine government has offered to co-operate with the United States, provided its participation in a military response is submitted to a vote in parliament.

There is also France. If there is a need to make commitments on behalf of France, they could not be made by the executive without consulting, of course, the national assembly and the Senate. Such major countries as France and Argentina believe it is necessary to have debates and votes on situations such as these.

What are we to think about Canada when the government only wants to have take note and consultative debates and does not want to hold a vote on such major issues?

• (1255)

M. Richard Marceau: Mr. Speaker, the intent of the motion is to ask that the House not limit itself to take note debates, but to hold votes.

I would like to appeal one more time to our Liberal colleagues. I can see that the member for Scarborough is listening to me attentively. I had the opportunity to travel with him in Israel, where democracy is under attack. While we were there, there were terrorist attacks. We were able to observe the vitality of Israeli democracy.

I appeal to his sense of democracy. I have had the opportunity to discuss different subjects with him for many hours, including how democracies should react to such attacks. I appeal to him and to his colleagues to pressure the government to allow them to vote too. I know that they would like to vote on this. I know that Liberal members would like the opportunity to give their perspective. I know that they are as concerned and as worried as other members of the House. Before sending the finest young people of Quebec and Canada off to battlefields located thousands of kilometres away, I know that they will want to have their say.

So I hope that they are pressuring the government. I hope that they are pressuring their colleagues to have a chance to have their say. After all, they are members too. They are just as concerned as we are on this side.

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier on his excellent presentation.

I would like to ask him this. A few speeches this morning also referred to it. Does he not consider it somewhat cynical on the part of this government that when it was in opposition, when the gulf war was declared, it hounded the Conservative Mulroney government daily with questions and statements to have a vote held in the House? The situation before us is quite similar.

Does he not find it cynical that this government, which was in opposition at the time, is beginning to dissociate itself from its stance on the importance of democracy, whereby members can vote on debates such as we are having today?

Mr. Richard Marceau: Mr. Speaker, this is the very question put to me by Nancy Wood, a CBC radio host in Montreal, just before I entered the House to take part in the debate.

I am not sure whether it is a good or a bad thing but I still have an ounce of idealism left in me and I dare to hope that the proper position, which the Liberals held in opposition in 1990, is the one held by the Liberal government in 2001.

Supply

[English]

Mr. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for the opportunity to participate in this important debate. The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier has stated that while it does provide some difficulties for us all, there are those of us who consider parliament to be a very significant institution in our country where important matters of state get debated and voted on.

However I must take some distance from my colleague. I would like to outline why the motion is premature, hypothetical and absent of facts. The motion states:

That this House urge the government, in any reprisals taken in reaction to the terrorist strikes in New York City on September 11, not to commit Canadian armed forces in any offensive action until the House of Commons has been consulted and has voted on the matter.

This is a hypothetical motion. At this point in time we have not been asked to participate in any action whatsoever. Any hypothetical request is always a dangerous position to be in, particularly if ultimately we as a government have to make a decision.

There is also an absence of facts. Is there anyone in the Chamber who has a full grasp of the facts? I read media accounts, as do other members. I do not regard media accounts as facts. I have not been privy to any CSIS briefing or any military briefing which would enlighten me. Therefore I am in a similar position to all other members in the Chamber that I am not in possession of the facts.

Two weeks have passed since the crisis and there is a propensity to jump to conclusions. One of the conclusions is that Canada is a terrorist haven. The facts seem to be somewhat different, in that virtually all the terrorist activities to date originated in the United States. Nevertheless that seems to be a fixed conclusion by many members of the media.

Another fixed conclusion is that our refugee laws are lax. I witnessed a lawyer on television the other night who has several clients in jail on refugee related issues. He was expressing a great deal of frustration about having his clients in jail on what he considered an absence of clear and hard evidence of why they should be kept in jail. That did not seem to make much of a dent in the forgone conclusion that our refugee laws are lax.

We have been asked to engage in an armed response to this initiative. I ask hypothetically whether the armed response would also include intelligence gathering. Is intelligence gathering part of the armed forces response or is it not part of the armed forces response? Are we being asked to comment on that?

If we are being asked to comment on that, do we need a parliamentary resolution every time CSIS decides to engage in clandestine intelligence gathering activities both within our borders and outside our borders and in turn to share that material with other agencies?

We have seen a number of conclusions that our legislation is inadequate. Indeed there are gaps within our legislation which I believe the Minister of Justice will be addressing. We have been urged to adopt legislation similar to that of Great Britain and the United States. They are pieces of legislation that some might argue are quite draconian and made no difference on September 11.

Supply

•(1300)

Parliament is being urged to have a vote on this matter. As I said, I find the motion somewhat premature. We do not have a great deal of facts with which to work, and it is a hypothetical motion.

I would like to point out that parliament has not voted directly on any wartime resolution since World War II. We did not vote on resolutions regarding Korea. Resolutions regarding the gulf war had to do with resolutions of the United Nations rather than voting to go to war.

Parliament has many ways in which it can guide government. Take note debates are one of those ways. I heard hon. members opposite diminish the value of take note debates but I do not take that view. Take note debates are extremely important and give parliamentarians some opportunity to suggest to government various ways to think about specific issues.

We also have the opportunity to engage in debate on days like today where opposition parties get to set the agenda for the day.

There is of course scrutiny on a variety of committees and members get opportunities to make their voices heard before government.

Ultimately, there is the confidence vote to which every government is subject. If parliamentarians are absolutely convinced that the government is going in the wrong direction, then presumably they can move confidence in the government.

The last debate similar to this was on the Kosovo issue. The then leader of the Reform Party made six conditions for the deployment of troops, and they were somewhat instructive.

The first condition was that parliamentarians should be satisfied that there was a serious international threat and that diplomatic efforts to resolve it had failed. I would not argue that there is a serious international threat. I am not convinced, however, that diplomatic efforts are exhausted, although they do seem to be very close to being exhausted.

The second condition was that parliament should be satisfied that as far as possible there was multinational support for military action. Again, that condition, frankly, seems to be met, that there is international support for action, particularly in the NATO countries.

The third condition was that the government should be satisfied that there was a workable plan and strategy for military action. At this point in time, I do not believe that there is a workable plan and strategy for military action, so that in fact would not meet the condition.

The fourth condition was that parliament must be satisfied that any plan for military action was a well defined mission and was a clear definition of Canada's role. Without a workable plan and strategy, I do not see how we have a well defined mission or a clear definition of our role.

The fifth condition was that parliament must be satisfied that the role expected was within our fiscal and military capabilities. The question is: "What is being expected of us?"

The sixth condition was that parliament must be assured the command and control structure was satisfactory to Canada.

Basically conditions three through six have not been met in my mind. I go back to the original point that the motion is hypothetical and premature, and we clearly do not have a lot of facts. The greater likelihood is that this action will be far more clandestine and will be based on intelligence rather than overwhelming military might.

Certain members of the House, particularly the Privy Council will be briefed and some members of the Privy Council will be more briefed than others. Necessarily there will be a closing of the circle because we do not want to broadcast any activities that we might be engaged in.

I am sure that hon. members opposite, and indeed members in all parts of the House, would not want to be advertising what actions Canada would take.

We also have the issue of the unintended consequences of signalling a differentiation in resolve. If we take this vote now and the actions do not start for a month, two months or three months or if the actions go in a direction different from what we initially thought we were voting on, we may find ourselves in a very difficult and awkward position.

Finally, the issue is: Will this vote be binding on the government and, if so, how is it binding on the government?

•(1305)

My position on this motion is clearly that it is hypothetical, premature and that there is an absence of facts. I forgot to mention that I am splitting my time.

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the speech of my hon. colleague across. The events of last week did two things to the people of Canada. First, it brought us all together in support of our neighbour's initiatives to the south. Second, it raised the issue of tolerance. Canadians have known for at least a century that this country is made up of immigrants and the one thing we do not want to do is repeat the mistakes of the past. Therefore, I, like all members of the House, promote tolerance at a time like this.

I would like to make some comments on the hon. member's comments on immigration. The House knows that I have raised immigration issues over this past year, certainly on issues of screening. Even if Bill C-11 was passed this very day, including what the government had said it would do to improve the situation, I believe there would be no improvement. Unless there is a will to put the time and effort into ensuring that we have the relevant data to properly screen the people coming into this country, we will keep making the same kinds of mistakes we are making today.

Supply

Even without the bill in place, there could be a rule that government put more money toward hiring more people. I am told that many of our overseas offices do not communicate with each other. In fact, in Canada our own departments do not communicate with each other. That has to change. CSIS, RCMP, other security agencies and national defence have to work together. Does my hon. colleague see screening as the focal issue when it comes to the security of this country?

•(1310)

Mr. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, my colleague asked two questions: one with respect to the support for our U.S. brethren and the second with respect to tolerance in this country.

On the first question with respect to support for our U.S. brethren, at this point our response as a nation has been exemplary. In many ways Canadians have stood shoulder to shoulder with the citizens and the government of the United States.

The second question is with respect to tolerance and immigration issues. I believe our Canadian society has some difficult decisions to make, and we may actually make some wrong decisions.

When I listen to my answering machine in my constituency office, I am somewhat alarmed. It is a bit disturbing to hear some of those comments. I join with the Prime Minister in saying that I would turn my back on those constituents. These are not attitudes that build our society.

With respect to the issue of screening, the hon. member is probably right, that this will be where the rubber hits the road. These are very difficult things to do. People do not walk into this country with *T*s painted on their foreheads saying "I am a terrorist".

We do have differential data and resources to apply that data as well as assessment procedures. I know my hon. colleague has people come into his office where decisions have or have not been made by CSIS or by immigration officials, which leaves everyone scratching their head.

In light of these events, I am sure that there will be a differential attitude toward screening issues.

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could the hon. member for Scarborough East comment on the following? After the September 11 strike, which I viewed as an attack on us, and after NATO changed the wording of article 5 to reflect that any attack on any member of NATO is an attack on all of NATO, how can the hon. member from the opposition describe the action which may be taken in the future as an offensive act?

How can the hon. member make this statement when we were attacked on September 11 and NATO said that an attack on one is an attack on all? Could the hon. member comment on the words offensive and defensive?

Mr. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member pointing out the distinction between offensive and defensive. Clearly NATO is a defensive alliance. Article 5 was invoked, and we are creating a response. Where we go from there and how we move into an offensive response is probably up for some debate.

•(1315)

Mr. Bryon Wilfert (Oak Ridges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to reiterate that Canada is committed to the fight against international terrorism. I think we have clearly demonstrated our support both for the United States and the international community with regard to this issue.

The issue before the House is does parliament have a role in this. I think emphatically that, it does have a role. To demonstrate that I would like to review a few points.

Since the government came to power, it has placed a premium on consulting with and soliciting the views of members of the House, particularly where matters of military and defence issues are at stake. Many of us have participated as recently as last week in those debates. The government does not take lightly its prerogative to initiate military action and deploy members of the Canadian forces. It views the opportunity to discuss these issues in parliament as a crucial step when we are looking at decision making.

From Iraq to Kosovo to central Africa, members of all parties in the House have had the opportunity to voice their views on what Canada's response should be in the face of various international crises. I believe that is the way it should be, and that is the way it is.

At the same time, however, we must preserve the ability of any government to respond rapidly, once all views have been heard and the time to act is upon us. We must know when to set aside our partisan differences and speak with one voice as a nation. Our solidarity in support of decisions to deploy troops not only increases the legitimacy of our actions in the eyes of the Canadian public and in the international community, but it lets members of the Canadian forces know the people of Canada are behind them.

The government's approach to consulting members of the House regarding deployment of troops has been well documented. The government recognizes the importance of hearing from all sides when such important issues are at stake. It goes above and beyond its duty to solicit them. I would like to provide some examples of this.

The government has held innumerable consultations and debate, both in the House and at various committees on all aspects of foreign and defence policy issues. Going back as far as 1994, special emergency debates were held regarding Canada's current and future peacekeeping roles in Yugoslavia, Haiti and Rwanda.

One year later another series of debates were held on whether to extend the mission of the Canadian forces serving in UNPROFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia. At that time the Minister of National Defence himself suggested that Canadian participation should periodically be reviewed thereby giving parliament the opportunity to consider our defence commitment at regular intervals. In fact the House has had innumerable opportunities to discuss our deployments in the Balkans right up to and including Canada's participation in NATO led air campaigns in Kosovo.

Supply

As many of us will remember, these consultations took many forms. The government held several debates on Canada's reaction and subsequent response to the humanitarian crisis that was breaking out in Kosovo. At the same time, the Standing Committees on National Defence and Veterans Affairs and Foreign Affairs and International Trade received numerous briefings from senior officials from various departments, even as those events were unfolding.

The value of debates and deliberations is not to be underestimated. I think there has been and continues to be the belief that a broad consensus emerges in the House which gives Canada the legitimacy it needs when the time comes to make the difficult decisions to intervene.

Let me reiterate that the government does not take lightly the decision to deploy Canadian troops in any mission. We value the input provided by members on all sides of the House as well as deliberations at the various committees. Being a member of the Standing Committee for National Defence and Veterans Affairs, the committee has been and continues to be seized by these issues, including the issue of readiness of the armed forces.

Those issues have come before the House on several occasions and each time the government has made it clear its commitment to preserving the vital role that parliament plays in times of crisis. That has been demonstrated both in words and in deeds.

Again, today we are reaffirming the position that has been taken by several ministers as well as the Prime Minister. The government is fully committed to consulting parliament on the situation as it unfolds before us.

• (1320)

As others have said, no decisions have been made by the United States nor has any request been made for formal Canadian forces participation in any operations.

We are all understandably very concerned about the horrific events that took place on September 11 and their aftermath. We have had the opportunity to express these concerns three times in the House since the House resumed. We saw the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs carry that message, the Prime Minister yesterday in his meeting with President Bush.

A resolution passed in parliament. We have had some references to the gulf war. Supporting the deployment of the Canadian troops during the gulf war was the measure taken in support of the various United Nations resolutions at that time. As the campaign on terrorism evolves, it may be necessary to consult parliament further on the issue of deploying Canadian troops much as the government did during the gulf war. However that time has not come. I would agree with my hon. colleague that it is hypothetical at this time. We have not yet been given a motion as to the specifics of what would be asked for.

Members of the House need only in my view look at history to be reassured of the role they play in contributing to the foreign policy of the nation. I believe that the role of parliament is to debate it and to make sure that members provide the necessary input for any future government actions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Antoine Dubé Lévis-et-Chutes-de la-Chaudière, BQ: Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to all the speeches made since this morning and I sense that the Liberal member, whom I know quite well, is somewhat receptive to the motion. While he could not directly support it, he seems to have left the door open.

This is the second week of debate. I wonder if he could explain to us why given the extraordinary situation in which we find ourselves, the parliamentary committees that are the most appropriate venues to look at this issue, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Standing Committee on National Defence, were not convened by the government? Meanwhile, we are having a debate here today that was initiated by the Bloc Québécois, an opposition party.

Does the hon. member find it normal that, contrary to what it said in its 1993 red book, the party in office is not getting parliamentary committees involved in the study and review of the current situation?

[*English*]

Mr. Bryon Wilfert: First of all, Mr. Speaker, as you know, all parties get together to put forth names for the composition of those committees.

Having said that, let me say that the steering committee of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs, of which I am a member, met last week. We discussed a number of issues with regard to the present crisis.

Even though formal appointment of members of the committee has not occurred, rather than being idle the members who currently reside on that committee met as a steering committee and had the opportunity to discuss a number of these issues. I know that a member of the Bloc was in attendance and I think there was an opportunity to look at some priority issues, not that they are binding, necessarily, on the future composition of the committee, but given the nature of the discussion I think it would be fairly safe to say that the intent and the direction the steering committee looked at would probably be simply endorsed, hopefully, because a number of the members of the steering committee, particularly on the side of the opposition, indicated that they would be back when the committees are formally comprised, I would suggest probably within the next few days or so.

However I think it is important to know that business has not stopped, at least in terms of the defence committee. The member's question was a very valuable one.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the government member if it is not time to show these terrorists what a democracy is all about. We live in a democracy with a parliamentary system. Debates must be held, not just take note debates, but real debates that conclude with a vote.

Does the hon. member find it normal that the Bloc Québécois has to use an opposition day to propose a motion to debate such an important issue? This should be a given in parliamentary system that is based on democracy? We are forced to use this day to present such a motion in order to have a debate followed by a vote on this most important matter.

When we see the deployments currently being made all over the world by the United States and Great Britain we have no choice but to say "There must be a vote in the House of Commons".

These are the comments I wanted to make. I would like to hear those of the hon. member. It is important that all of us, as members of parliament, have an opportunity to vote on the issue.

• (1325)

[English]

Mr. Bryon Wilfert: Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a misunderstanding that somehow the Canadian forces are standing still until parliament or the government makes a decision. In fact that is not the case at all, whether it is the deployment of CF-18s, our discussion with the Americans through Norad, the work at NATO with regard to article 5 or the deployment of frigates.

At the present time we do not have a formal request. The nature of how Canada will respond obviously will be framed by the nature of the request and the motion which I am sure may then be before the House.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in my name and on behalf of men, women and children of Laurentides, I wish to address my first words to the families who lost a loved one, a friend, a colleague, a boss. To all those who survived these tragic events, I express my sincere condolences and I assure them that my thoughts and prayers are with them.

Having said that, as representatives of the people in our respective ridings, we rise in the House on behalf of our constituents. This has never been truer.

I always considered myself as a woman who speaks and lives with words like "peace", "tolerance", and "openness to others". However, since September 11, I discovered that I could use a language tinged with anger and fury. Within a moment, I had thoughts that I normally would never have had.

One must not be distracted by acts of extremists such as those we witnessed. We must push to the limits our will to build a peaceful world. There we will find all the signification of this motion proposed by my colleague from Roberval. I will read it to the benefit of my constituents:

That this House urge the government, in any reprisals taken in reaction to the terrorist strikes in New York City on September 11, not to commit Canadian armed forces in any offensive action until the House of Commons has been consulted and has voted on the matter.

Why should parliament vote on this issue? We have the government's reaction and I hope that, at the end of the day, we will have been able to convince it to support our motion. Democracy itself is at stake here.

When a political party is forced to use its opposition day to convince the government that a vote should be held before Canadian armed forces are committed in any action, it means that something is very wrong in parliament. When the government is incapable of making the commitment we are asking it to make because it is afraid that it may not have enough time, it means that something is wrong.

Supply

Over the last eight years, the House of Commons has been recalled to deal with issues far less important than this one. I remember sitting during a weekend to deal with issues such as jobs, salaries, labour negotiations and back to work legislation. To say now that there would be hesitation to recall the House to deal with an issue as important as sending Canadian troops to war is absolutely ridiculous. I cannot believe it, and neither can my fellow citizens.

I will tell the House what happened in my riding last weekend. Like all members, I must attend certain events in my riding on weekends. Last weekend I attended a function in a residence for the elderly, which was celebrating 25 years of operation. The residence provides social housing to senior citizens. I sat at the same table as the director of the residence, a woman, who told me that I had to do something, that I could not let our soldiers be sent to war like that.

Another woman sitting at our table said "My son is in the army and I do not want to see him go to war without us knowing exactly what is going to happen. You are my representative and it is your responsibility to decide and to vote".

What am I supposed to say to her? That the government will make its decisions unilaterally without consulting us? It makes no sense, especially on a policy issue. We must not let that happen. As elected representatives, we have to face the situation.

• (1330)

This is a fundamental issue. If we have to raise the question of a vote in the House on the commitment of armed forces in a war against Afghanistan or some other country and I think opposition parties agree on this then I am at a loss.

Let me remind the House a few facts. In the 1993 red book, we could read this:

We will continue to support democracy and respect for human rights worldwide and will provide for a more open foreign policy-making process.

A Liberal government will also expand the rights of Parliament to debate major Canadian foreign policy initiatives—

I think this is quite clear and it is not precisely what is happening right now. Here is another quotation, this time from the 1997 red book:

An independent, effective Canadian foreign policy cannot be achieved without the active participation of Canadians, through public and non-governmental organizations.

It speaks for itself.

I would not like to see our troops sent over without knowing what their specific role will be. We know very well that our military do not have numbers that compare with American, French, or British troops. We should be realistic about this and do what we can with what we have.

Supply

Right now, I would not like and I would not accept that Canadian troops be sent over there as cannon fodder. We must not allow this to happen. We must absolutely know how they will be used and what their role will be. As we know, our armed forces have been evolving more to take on a preventative role, acting as peacekeepers, and involved in foreign aid. Our armed forces are not offensive. They could very well be but they have not evolved that way. We have not been involved in a war for I do not know how many years.

We must know exactly what role is expected of our Canadian forces and we must reach a decision together with the people we represent. They want to be consulted. If people elect representatives to parliament, it is so that they can speak on their behalf.

Up to now I have seen myself as the voice of the riding of Laurentides and I want to continue being the voice of voters in my area. This holds true for all of us here in this Chamber, no matter which party we belong to.

In spite of our differences of opinion on some issues, on an issue as important as a war, it is imperative that we be the true voice of our fellow citizens.

As I said earlier, people in Laurentides are extremely concerned, and rightly so. Certainly, if the government were to agree to our motion and vote for it, it would act in a true democratic spirit and with great open mindedness. It would show all of us here in this Chamber, who represent five different parties, that democracy is alive and well in this parliament as it is in other parliaments.

I would like our position to be taken into account. I want the debate to be peaceful and for everyone to have a say when the time comes for us to make a decision as important as sending Canadian troops, our young men and women, to the front. We will have to make this decision together, based on what our fellow citizens have told us.

• (1335)

Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would say that, right now, the Bloc Québécois is calling on our fellow citizens in Quebec and indeed across Canada. This motion we have put forward aims at protecting our democracy.

How can we protect our democracy? When we have representatives, as we do to in the House of Commons, it is a matter of standing up and debating what the government can do. People have to understand to what the word “executive” refers. It refers to the Prime Minister and his ministers. Would they be the ones deciding? No, that is not what democracy is all about.

The current international threat of terrorist activity prompts me to ask a very important question. I would like the hon. member to tell us: How could we get the people who are at home, all the people in Quebec, in my riding of Châteauguay and across Canada, to take immediate action to convince government members that our motion is essential to protect democracy and ought therefore be supported?

Ms. Monique Guay: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Châteauguay for his question. It is clear that people are going to react anyway. That have already started to do so.

I receive phone calls. I receive letters at my office. I receive representations from peace groups. It is obvious that actions will be

taken to ensure that all members of this House are well aware of these concerns.

People want to know exactly what role the army is going to be called upon to play. They do not want to send our young people to the front without knowing where they are going. People have a lot of concerns with regard to this whole situation because they fear that, when the Americans finally say they need us, the government will send our troops without saying a word, without even asking questions about our army's role in terms of the number of soldiers that should be sent over there or without asking if we agree to send our young people to the front.

We talked about democracy earlier. I would like to say this. There are countries with parliaments similar to ours. I am thinking of Argentina. The government of that country has offered to co-operate with the United States, but on the condition that its participation to any military action be put to a vote in parliament. The same goes for France. There will be a vote by the executive, but the national assembly and the Senate will have to be consulted. The same goes for Germany also.

A country such as Canada that claims to be a great democracy is unable to consult. Let us lead by example and let us be a true democracy. Let us make sure that members have the right to make their own decision and vote on this issue.

• (1340)

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last Sunday I attended a presentation on changing the authority for the military militia. There were people from all ridings of the lower St. Lawrence and 150 members of the militia.

All militiamen asked the same question: “Will we have a clear mandate of non-liability?”

Yesterday, we saw the Americans opinion of Canada. Yesterday, the Prime Minister came out of the meeting and told us that the Americans had set no requirements.

As representatives of all our constituents and of all those people in the military, if we do not get the opportunity to make sure they receive a specific mandate, a clear mandate on what will happen, whether it is yes or no to our participation, I think we must at least find out what the situation is.

In any case, the federal government will be much stronger if it supported by this motion. Therefore, I would like to know if the member considers that it is important for our military and our militia to know exactly what their government will commit them to?

Ms. Monique Guay: Mr. Speaker, of course it is essential that the military personnel know where they are going and it is also essential to make some provision for this. One cannot come out of a meeting with the president of the United States and say “He did not ask me anything”, and not prepare for anything. Come on, this is not the way this works.

Supply

The government must do some prevention, be prepared to face the situation and also carry out consultations. The government, the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Defence will have to see what our capabilities are and not make commitments with both eyes closed and both hands tied behind their backs. That is out of the question. We must protect our people and our military forces. We cannot send them to the front without knowing exactly what role they will be playing.

At present, we know very well how things are going in Afghanistan. They have an army; they have a different mentality. They are prepared to commit suicide for their cause. This means we must pay attention and be careful.

I believe we must also rely on the role of international courts, of NATO and the UN. We must work together with all these organizations in order to ultimately achieve positive results, instead of rushing in without any consultations and without knowing where we are going. We simply ask that democracy be applied here in parliament.

Mr. Antoine Dubé Lévis-et-Chutes-de la-Chaudière, BQ: Mr. Speaker, this being the first opportunity I have had to speak in the House since the September 11 attacks in New York and Washington, I wish to join with all those who have already offered their condolences to the friends and families of the victims.

I may be a Quebecer but, in circumstances such as these, we become citizens of the world. What happened in New York and Washington could have happened here. It could happen anywhere. Everyone hoped it would not, but the extent of the devastation is unbelievable. It all unfolded on television; we heard the words of witnesses to the tragedy and they moved us.

These attacks took place in the United States but, as I said, they could have happened elsewhere. Basically, it was democracy that was attacked not a country, but the democratic values we all defend were attacked.

As a member of the Sub committee on Human Rights and International Development, I am particularly concerned about this aspect of human rights, not just here or in the United States, but throughout the world. The confrontation which we dread and which will take place will affect civilian populations. The victims of the events in New York and Washington were primarily civilians.

As wars and methods of attack evolve, there are increasing numbers of civilian victims, innocent victims who have nothing to do with the will of their leaders, or leaders of groups, as seems to be the case here.

When it comes to human rights, it is fairly easy to agree that these issues are related to democracy. Sometimes, when I have a speech to make, I have adopted the habit of consulting a dictionary. For instance, the entry for the word democracy says that it comes from the Greek "demos", meaning "people". "Democracy" is defined as follows: "political doctrine holding that sovereignty must belong to all citizens".

I find the words "all citizens" very significant. What have we seen across the way for the past week? The Prime Minister says that they have the situation in hand, that he is speaking regularly to officials throughout the world.

He is even speaking with the president of the United States, who has no memory of their discussions, because he neglected to mention him in his speech on Thursday. Democracy is based on respect for the freedom and equality of citizens, of citizens everywhere.

This morning, the House leader of the Bloc Québécois moved that there be a debate and a vote before committing our armed forces. Military resources naturally mean human resources and financial resources, but we have to bear in mind that those resources should never be deployed any which way. A military offensive action is the last option which should be considered, though it has to be considered. No options should be dismissed. They say that "if you want peace, you have to prepare for war." Planning is good.

Before deploying forces, a decision has to be taken. Based on the meaning of the word democracy, this decision should be taken by all citizens.

How did the government react to that proposal? The first speaker was the Minister of National Defence, who spoke about four or five options. His first argument struck me. He said it was contrary to what had been the practice of this government over the last eight years.

• (1345)

Actually, it is the opposite. It seems to me that, even if it involved changing this practice in such an extraordinary situation, it ought to be contemplated.

I will not repeat what other colleagues and the hon. member for Laurentides said, but I will read commitments made in the red book, which clearly stated that before committing important military resources to offensive actions, there would have to be a debate followed by a vote in the House. This was one of the promises upon which the government was elected the first time. It was elected on that basis; that is what the government was saying. Besides, when they were in the opposition, the Liberals said the same thing. Again, I will not repeat the amendment moved by the deputy prime minister to a motion by the then minister of foreign affairs, who is now a member of an opposition party, the Progressive Conservative Party.

What is happening here? We are witnessing a situation where people who are in opposition promise to do something, but once they are in power, they do the opposite or do not meet their commitments. How then can young and ordinary citizens be attracted to politics if election promises are not held? I will not talk about the GST and other issues like free trade, about which the government changed its mind, they have already been pointed out, but this is a matter of utmost importance.

People listening to me could obviously say: "Yes, but it is impossible to predict such an event. It certainly could not be predicted or mentioned in a red book written more than eight years ago". However we were in a quite similar situation in 1990 with the gulf war. In all that connections could be made with the current confrontation. However, that is not what the government intends to do.

On November 29, 1990, the current Deputy Prime Minister tabled an amendment which said:

This support shall not be interpreted as approval of the use of Canadian Forces for offensive action without further consultations with and approval by this House.

Supply

I say again, the Bloc Québécois, this is my understanding of our position, has given and is giving its support to the Canadian government in order for it to study, discuss and give its opinion to influence the opinion of the American authorities on this matter. We must of course give our support to the fight against terrorism, to a world war against terrorism. We have to do that. However should the use of military means be contemplated immediately? Worse, should the use of such means be considered behind closed doors? For so-called strategic reasons, we cannot mention what we will do. It is somewhat like baseball. It will be a hit and run situation, where they will hit first and consult later. This is not the way things should be done.

In this case, I believe the greatest paradox is that the Canadian government, through its Prime Minister and its external affairs and national defence ministers, says that it cannot vote for the proposition put forward by the Bloc Québécois. Whereas the country that has been the most concerned up till now, the United States, through its president, obtained a resolution from its two houses, the senate and the House of Representatives. The president, the one responsible for the strategy, has the sanction of his parliamentary authorities but not Canada.

The member for Laurentides reminded us that France has agreed to support the Americans but that it intends to consult the national assembly before making a decision with regard to the deployment of its armed forces. The same goes for Germany, for Argentina, and I am sure it will be the same most everywhere.

This morning, the Minister of National Defence referred to the constitution when he said that we were a representative democracy. He wanted to show that that is the way it is and that is the way it has always been. I must say that, a few moments ago, someone made a mistake.

• (1350)

I will not hold it against the member who made that mistake. Contrary to what a Liberal member said, there was a vote on the issue of the Korean War.

Our society has evolved since 1867. I should remind members of certain facts. Women could not vote in 1867, but they can today. The only people who could vote under the representative democracy of that time were landowners. Today, all taxpayers have the right to vote. Even the voting age was lowered to 18. Now, as elected representatives of the people, we would only have the right to talk. Parliament would be a place for discussion and nothing else.

There is something else that I deplore and that I find rather incredible. Parliamentary committees, namely the national defence committee and the foreign affairs committee, are not even used to discuss this issue. It is now my turn to urge all members of the House to support our motion that says that a vote must be taken in the House before offensive military resources are deployed.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the speech of my colleague and I would like to ask him a very simple question.

Is the government's lack of leadership with respect to the vote issue not simply a reflection of its lack of an action plan? The

Minister for International Trade, for example, said there was an economic slowdown. The Minister of Finance said there might be a deficit. One day, he says there might be a deficit and the next he says the opposite. After all these statements the Prime Minister himself said that the economy was doing very well and the situation was not so bad.

Could we say that the democratic deficit we see in the House and the government's lack of leadership in this regard are demonstrations of the fact that the Canadian government is now totally disabled by the Prime Minister's lack of leadership on this issue?

• (1355)

Mr. Antoine Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I may not be as harsh as my colleague, the member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, by saying "Is there a lack of planning".

I think we can understand that no one could have anticipated such an unpredictable situation. Clearly, there is a lack of leadership, but I believe there is most of all a lack of influence. We saw it in the United States, where the president, to a certain extent, treated the Canadian Prime Minister as someone who did not have to be consulted, as it was a foregone conclusion that he would give his support because we are family.

Somehow, we are the United States of America. In that regard, I can understand that it is not the right time to squabble with the president of the United States, though this attitude is somewhat bizarre. Nevertheless, it proves that the Canadian Prime Minister does not have the influence he claims he does.

However, as far as planning is concerned, since almost two weeks have passed since the events which took place, I believe that we should do everything in our power, my father used to say "Everything could be turned upside down", to start planning. However, my main criticism of the government at this moment is its total lack of transparency.

Mr. Odina Desrochers (Lotbinière—L'Érable, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the following question to my colleague, the member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière.

Members will recall the events which took place in Quebec during the summit of the Americas. The Prime Minister, seeing himself as the great champion of democracy, said that he would do everything he could to ensure that there would be democracy in the Americas.

Does the hon. member not think that there is a lack of consistency of the part of the Prime Minister, since he committed himself openly to act as a champion of democracy, while today he is going the opposite way?

Mr. Antoine Dubé: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. However, in terms of consistency, I would say that the Prime Minister is consistent, because I did not find him very democratic and very transparent during the summit of the Americas in Quebec. Quite the contrary. It may have been the case in the speeches with the presidents, but apart from that, we did not feel that the Prime Minister was concerned about this issue or that democracy or respect for the peoples made him lose any sleep.

S. O. 31

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

MATCH INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

Hon. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate the 25th anniversary of MATCH International Centre. It is the first Canadian women's organization dedicated to fostering gender equality and social justice in the developing world.

Dr. Norma E. Walmsley and Ms. Suzanne Johnson-Harvor created MATCH in 1976 because they wanted to work with others to improve the lives of poor and marginalized women in countries in the southern hemisphere.

As Canadians we should be proud of the strides MATCH has made in giving hope to thousands of women in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and South America. The efforts of MATCH over the past 25 years to support self-directed development by women in the developing world has led to new generations of women being aware of their basic human rights.

Fellow members should know that in Sri Lanka MATCH and its partners are working to promote awareness of human rights, good governance and democracy. MATCH is also working in other parts of the world to provide valuable Canadian expertise.

Today the Government of Canada and the Canadian people congratulate this special Canadian organization on its 25th anniversary. We wish it many more successful years.

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● (1400)

HEALTH

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Canada's health care system is failing its seniors. The Canadian Medical Association has sent a dire warning that Canada's system of health care specialists is collapsing. That is a frightening revelation to the thousands of Canadian seniors who require specialty care.

The need for specialized care rises dramatically for Canadian seniors as they reach the age of 75. Many require specialized care on a daily basis to live a comfortable and pain free life.

The Canadian Medical Association has charged the government with systematically underfunding specialty care. The government is neglecting its responsibility to Canadian seniors and their families.

The health care system should not fail those who need it most. Canada's senior citizens should not fear growing old in their own country.

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CORPUS CHRISTI PARISH

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Superior North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Christmas eve 1951 the new parish of Corpus Christi in Thunder Bay celebrated its first mass. This year, 2001, Corpus Christi is celebrating its 50th anniversary. It was created under the

diocese of Sault Ste. Marie and is now under the diocese of Thunder Bay.

For the first 25 years the parish was led by three outstanding citizens: Father Regis St. James, its founder; Monsignor Roy Carey; and Father Mike Murtagh.

Over the past years it has had many pastors: Fathers Bourguignon, Carroll, Donnelly, Kennedy, Ronquillo, Mahoney and Campeau.

Corpus Christi is more than a building located on Red River Road. It is a parish of more than 700 families strong. It administers to spiritual needs, and never more so than during the recent world crisis of September 11, 2001.

Our pastor, Father Pat Stilla, is loved and respected by everyone. We are all proud and fortunate to have him as our leader.

* * *

HAMILTON

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently our community in Hamilton was faced with the unfortunate reality that we too are not immune to the type of ignorance and hate that acted as an impetus to the recent attacks on the United States.

In the early morning of September 15 a Hindu temple on Hamilton Mountain was burned to the ground and a mosque was vandalized. Hamilton has always been a community of tolerance and acceptance, embracing each other's diversity. These acts do not reflect the true spirit of our city.

Since that day I am proud to say that Hamilton's true colours have shone. Political and religious differences have been set aside. Hamiltonians are sitting together at the same table to discuss the common goals of awareness and tolerance.

Physical and emotional support is being offered to the Hindu community. The citizens of Hamilton are uniting in an effort to not only rebuild the Hindu temple but to re-establish Hamilton's spirit of solidarity and co-operation.

* * *

MILES FOR MEAGAN

Ms. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, September is Ovarian Cancer Month. Last week I had the honour to attend the launch of a special bike tour called Miles for Meagan on behalf of the National Ovarian Cancer Association.

Mike Rodger and his wife Marylynn lost their 18 year old daughter Meagan to ovarian cancer. Through the tour they hope to bring attention to this brutal disease. A team of riders joined Mike and Marylynn to cycle from Ottawa through many towns and villages to Toronto where they arrived today.

The number of women diagnosed with ovarian cancer is startling and disturbing. This year in Canada 2,500 women will be diagnosed and each year 1,500 women will die from it. It affects not only women but their families: husbands, brothers, fathers and children.

It is a cause worthy of our support. I hope everyone will join me to celebrate with Mike and Marylynn as they arrive in Toronto with the Miles for Meagan tour.

S. O. 31

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, following the hideous events that have taken place in the United States, our closest friend and ally has had to tighten its borders to protect itself from further attacks. With 50 known terrorist cells active in Canada, Americans are protecting themselves from us.

Trade with the United States is vital to our country. Without it our economy would atrophy and our standard of living would plummet. Our trucking industry is deeply concerned. Just in time deliveries are being missed and the overall movement of goods has slowed. Why? It is because Canada is a security risk to its largest trading partner.

Two weeks after the attack we are still waiting for a concrete plan to secure our country. The government must table a strong piece of anti-terrorism legislation. It must restore funding and resources to government agencies that ensure the safety and security of our citizens. It must re-examine and toughen our standards for customs, immigration and transport to ensure that our borders are secure and that we can travel safely and trade freely.

* * *

•(1405)

[*Translation*]

AUTISM

Ms. Hélène Scherrer (Louis-Hébert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, autism is a disorder affecting the way an individual interprets what he sees, hears and feels. A new study, made possible by financial assistance from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, has revived hopes in the fight against this disease.

Dr. Jeanette Holden, a researcher at Queen's University, is leading a large scale multidisciplinary team that is endeavouring to identify the genes involved in the susceptibility to autism spectrum disorders.

Research has demonstrated that, with intensive therapy in their preschool years, children with autism are indistinguishable from their peers on test scores by school age.

A screening program could identify high risk infants, allowing them to receive the treatment they need and ultimately lead to the possible prevention of this condition.

Dr. Holden and her team deserve congratulations and encouragement for their excellent work, as do all of the researchers of the Canadian Institute of Health Research.

Today's investments in research will benefit all Canadians tomorrow.

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TÉLÉCENTRE WORK CO-OPERATIVE

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Télécentre is a work co-operative with a mission to provide the people of the greater Drummondville region with television programming focused on local and regional information.

After a year of existence, the efforts and entrepreneurship of its founding members have already gained recognition. Télécentre has earned national recognition as well as an international award at the 3rd edition of the Quebec entrepreneurship competition.

The international aspect of Télécentre will enable it to establish business connections with France, as well as to maintain and develop its links with the Belgian local television stations that served as models for the creation of this work co-operative.

These distinctions have made the team's first season very special and will certainly give them a good impetus for their second.

I congratulate these young entrepreneurs on the successful completion of their project, and take this opportunity to point out the contribution made to it by COGECO, a cable company.

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TERRORISM

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this being my first day in the House since the beginning of the new session, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sorrow at the tragic events that took place in New York and Washington on September 11.

These events, where thousands of people, Americans, Canadians and citizens of a great many countries, lost their lives, brought out the best qualities in Canadians, our solidarity, our community spirit and our compassion. These events touched the very hearts of people around the world, and Canadians are no exception to this.

On behalf of the residents of Laval West, and on my own behalf, I extend sincere condolences to the families and friends of the victims and to the American people.

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL PARKS

Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the nation's 400 park wardens have been unable to fulfill their responsibilities to enforce the laws and regulations of the National Parks Act as a result of a decision by the labour department. In Jasper National Park alone, wardens have been unable to act on any of the 900 violations that have been witnessed.

One incident this summer highlighted how ludicrous the situation has become. A diligent park gate attendant saw a pool of fuel after a diesel tanker pulled away. A warden two kilometres away answered the call but his enforcement powers had been neutered. He could not get involved with enforcement. The warden followed the visible stream of fuel from the diesel tanker through the entire park, waiting for the RCMP to show up and deal with the environmental mess, but nothing was done.

The heritage minister must agree that wardens need their enforcement responsibilities returned. I ask the labour minister to rein in her department. A little common sense would save our parks.

TERRORISM

Mr. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, counter-terrorism law and policy should be organized around five foundational principles.

First, the struggle against terrorism should be a cornerstone of both domestic and international human security policy. It should mobilize parliaments, governments civil society and security forces.

Second, a clear and principled policy requires clear and principled thinking. We must jettison the notion that one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter. Rather, the principle must be that one democracy's terrorist is another democracy's terrorist and that terrorism, from whatever quarter and for whatever purpose, is unacceptable.

Third, it must be clear that this is a war against terrorism and not against Islam or any religion.

Fourth, the struggle against terrorism should explore and exhaust a multi-layered strategy of diplomatic, juridical, financial, informational and related strategic initiatives short of a military response.

Fifth, any military response must comport with the principles of international humanitarian law: the doctrines of necessity, proportionality, protection of civilians in armed conflict and the like.

In a word, the new transnational network of super terrorist suicide bombers is an existential threat that requires clear, principled thinking and comprehensive policy and strategy.

* * *

• (1410)

EASTWOOD COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Eastwood Community School in Thompson, the first Cree bilingual school in Manitoba. The Cree bilingual school concept evolved after two years of research and planning involving thousands of parents, guardians and students.

I give special thanks to the Thompson Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee, the Cree Bilingual Community School Steering Committee, the School District of Mystery Lake In House School Development Committee, and the trustees and administration of the Mystery Lake School Division.

Steps have been taken over the years to improve curriculum for native language and cultural awareness but the creation of this Cree bilingual school is the most dynamic yet.

Speaking at yesterday's grand opening, assistant superintendent Dave Hutchinson said:

The long term goal of this school is to develop bilingual and bicultural aboriginal and non-aboriginal individuals who are capable of working together to forge a more prosperous, harmonious, peaceful, just and equitable society.

Speaking at a recent conference in Winnipeg, Stephen Lewis stated that the current school system has failed aboriginal children. The Cree bilingual community school is a step toward restoration of aboriginal language and culture. It is a step in the right direction.

S. O. 31

[*Translation*]

ARAB ART

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, newspapers this morning reported that the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull has decided to cancel an exhibition of Arab art.

The executive assistant to the Minister of Canadian Heritage appears to have been aware since last Friday that museum management had decided to reconsider the exhibition, fearing that it might be perceived as a political event.

An exhibition that was planned well before the events of September 11 can in no way be construed as a political event. However, its cancellation constitutes a vote of non-confidence in the public. It is assuming that Canadians and Quebecers can not distinguish between Arab art and terrorism.

This would have been such a good opportunity for this government to put its money where its mouth is. When the Prime Minister went to a mosque to reassure Muslim Canadians that other Canadians were tolerant, did he believe what he was saying? If so, then he must ensure that the Arab exhibition takes place on the dates planned this fall.

* * *

AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE FOR EXPORTERS

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday evening in Montreal the Minister for International Trade presented awards of excellence to last year's leading exporters.

It is with great pleasure that I inform the House that FieldTurf of Montreal, and Lauzon Distinctive Hardwood Flooring of Papineauville, two Quebec companies, were among the ten recipients of awards of excellence.

Toronto's Teknion Corporation received the prestigious exporter of the year award. Teknion Corporation is an innovative company. The office systems and office furniture products it markets are original and of high quality. It has distributors in over 50 countries.

In addition, this company has created a large number of jobs. Its success in the export sector is an example to other Canadian countries.

In conclusion, I congratulate Teknion Corporation and all the other award winners. I wish them much success in the future.

* * *

[*English*]

PESTICIDES

Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, the law governing pesticides in Canada has been in place since before man landed on the moon. I do not need to tell hon. members that a lot has happened since that date 30 years ago.

Oral Questions

Many pesticides are still registered in Canada that are banned and restricted by our NAFTA and OECD partners. The Liberal government keeps promising a revamped pesticide act, but 30 years after the first act was tabled Canadians are still waiting.

During the 1993 election campaign the Prime Minister pledged in his red book that a Liberal government would introduce new pesticide legislation. Six years later, with no legislation on the books, the auditor general criticized the government for its pesticide management and called on it to overhaul the system.

In the 1999 Speech from the Throne the Liberals promised to address the potential health risks presented by pesticides. In 2000 I asked the Minister of Health when Canadians could expect to see the long awaited legislation. The minister said it was forthcoming. In 2001 I asked the minister the same question and he told me it was coming soon.

Canadians are tired of waiting. The time for honouring the commitment is long overdue. When will we see a new act?

* * *

• (1415)

CANADA RESEARCH CHAIR AWARD

Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to announce that five more outstanding researchers at the University of Manitoba have been awarded Canada research chairs. This so far brings to 12 the number of chairs awarded to the University of Manitoba. Chairholders are world leaders or rising stars in the natural sciences, engineering, health sciences, social sciences or humanities.

I am very proud to congratulate the University of Manitoba's newest Canada research chair recipients Dr. Brian Hasinoff, Dr. Kent HayGlass, Dr. Brian Cox, Dr. Lorrie Kirshenbaum and Dr. Lea Stirling. These exceptional researchers will contribute to the University of Manitoba's long tradition of advancing knowledge for the betterment of the citizens of Manitoba and the world.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

TERRORISM

Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Washington the Prime Minister said, and I quote, "the Superintendent of Institutions said all the assets of bin Laden and his associates should be frozen". He said that it was ordered last Friday. In fact, all they did last Friday was send a letter from the FBI asking banks to co-operate with the investigation of the hijackers. All they have done today is send a follow-up letter.

When will the government move from scanning the bank accounts of terrorists, dead terrorists I might add, to seizing and freezing the assets of terrorists who are alive and possibly living among us?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister responded when the question was posed about the 19 terrorists. Yesterday there was follow-up. When the president set out 27 institutions or individuals and said that the United States would

proceed to freeze their assets, Canada proceeded forthwith and those assets are now frozen.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we appreciate that action.

[Translation]

One of the terrorist groups banned by President Bush is the Armed Islamic Group of Algeria. Convicted terrorist Ahmed Ressay was, when in Montreal, part of a large group of thieves which financed the actions of this group in Canada.

Has the government frozen or seized the assets of this group, and if not, what is it waiting for?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the action being called for by the Leader of the Opposition is one taken by the financial institution or bank in question. This bank or institution deals directly with the RCMP, that is how it is done.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): That is not an action, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

The Prime Minister surprised opposition members yesterday when he told reporters in Washington that we were blocking legislation currently before the House that would ratify the international convention on terrorist financing. In fact, last week the government voted against the Canadian Alliance when we moved to ratify the convention.

Bill C-16 does not ban terrorist fundraising. It only takes away their tax receipts. To which bill currently before the House is the Prime Minister referring? Which bill will fulfill Canada's commitments under the international convention? Which bill was the Prime Minister talking about?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was in the House when the government House leader stood up and asked for the unanimous consent of all members to support a government motion to do that very thing and the opposition voted against it and said no.

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that was a watered down motion.

Yesterday's rapid response to bin Laden by President Bush is to be commended. Despite years of rhetoric from this government and this minister, there is still no bill before parliament that ratifies either the convention against the financing of terrorists or the suppression of terrorist bombings. Will the minister immediately introduce comprehensive, anti-terrorist legislation?

•(1420)

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have made it plain that the government will take all necessary steps to ratify and implement both the UN convention on terrorist bombing and the UN convention on the suppression of terrorist financing. We will do that as quickly as possible. I call upon the opposition to ensure that this legislation receives speedy passage through the House.

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we have been waiting for years and now she has more rhetoric.

Yesterday, President Bush froze the finances of 27 groups that are connected to bin Laden. Our own security services have warned that some of these dangerous groups are operating here in Canada.

Will the minister take immediate steps to specifically name and legally ban these terrorist organizations from using Canada to organize international murder?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is referring to how we go about implementing the UN convention on the suppression of terrorist financing, we are considering both a definition for terrorist organizations and the addition of a list of designated organizations that would be defined as terrorist organizations.

* * *

[Translation]

PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since the September 11 attacks, the Bloc Québécois has, for the most part, supported the Prime Minister because he has acted responsibly in this House and before the public.

Following his meeting with President Bush yesterday, the Prime Minister committed a faux pas, a major blunder.

Does the Prime Minister realize that by, reporting his discussions with President Bush to a partisan gathering at a fundraising event rather than to parliament, he was not behaving as a head of state?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had a speech to make and I used the opportunity. It was very important to speak to the financial community because, if we want this international crisis not to affect Canadians too strongly, we must rebuild the confidence of the business community, following discussions with the president.

The president himself gave a speech a few days ago calling on the financial community to not lose faith and to believe as we do in Canada that our economy in the medium and long term, is in very good shape.

It was my duty to call on the business community to maintain its confidence in Canadian institutions.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, British Prime Minister Tony Blair met President Bush last week. Aware of the importance of this meeting, he immediately called all his counterparts in the European Union on his return and met all the members of all British parties.

Oral Questions

By behaving as he did, was the Prime Minister of Canada not derelict in his duty and lacking in respect for parliament and the members who represent the people here?

I have no problem with his meeting business people, but I argue that he should have come here and reported to parliament and then met with partisans.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the British and Canadian parliamentary systems differ. The British Prime Minister meets the House of Commons once a week for 15 minutes.

Here, the Prime Minister is in the House three or four times a week for an hour, and each party leader and member can question him on national television and before the press.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister should realize that it is not the number of times that he is here that counts, but the quality of his comments.

Some hon. members: Oh, Oh!

Mr. Michel Gauthier: The Prime Minister's decision to report on his meeting with president Bush to a partisan assembly rather than to parliament speaks volumes about what he thinks of the value of that meeting.

How can the Prime Minister, the senior statesman among G-7 leaders, behave in such a partisan fashion after a meeting with the President of the United States, instead of acting like a leader of world stature who is respectful of democracy and of this parliament?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I spoke on Canadian television when I replied to the questions of the media in Washington.

A few minutes later, when I was with President Bush, he did not answer questions. After breakfast, I made myself available to the Canadian and American media and I gave an account of the meeting. I knew that I would be in the House of Commons at 2 p.m. today to answer the questions of the opposition on my meeting with President Bush.

I notice that since the beginning of oral question period, I have not been asked a single question on the substance of the meeting.

Some hon. members: Oh, Oh!

An hon. member: There is no substance.

•(1425)

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister himself said there is no substance. We are still looking for that substance.

An hon. member: Yes indeed.

Mr. Gauthier: Will the Prime Minister admit that he would have had much more credibility if he had come before President Bush with the unanimous support of this parliament, rather than appear with only the support of his cabinet, whose members are all appointed by him?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that the Parliament of Canada held a debate on the events of September 11 as soon as it resumed its business. We had a debate on the very first day that parliament sat and every member had an opportunity to speak.

Before I travelled to the United States we had a special debate during which hon. members expressed their opinions. I read each and every one of the speeches before meeting with the president, so as to be aware of the opinion of all those who spoke.

* * *

[*English*]

TERRORISM

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the NDP remains adamant that the terrorist attacks were crimes against humanity and therefore must be dealt with through a UN sponsored international court or tribunal. The Bloc is clear about the importance of a UN role. The Tories now seem to agree that the courts and democratic institutions must be part of the solution.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Did he put the case to President Bush for a UN sponsored international court proceeding as the first line of attack against terrorism?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the UN has two special courts in the Hague: one in relation to crimes in Rwanda and the other in relation to the former Yugoslavia. It has not established another special court for terrorism. If it does we will support it but it has not done that at the moment.

The United Nations Security Council passed a resolution on September 12 giving authority to the United States to act according to the attack it faced the day before.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the question of substance is whether the Prime Minister is prepared to provide leadership around ensuring that we have a UN sponsored international court or tribunal. He simply cannot choose which international laws he wants to obey. A coalition, no matter how broad, cannot simply take the law into its own hands.

We need the Prime Minister to invoke article 35 of the UN charter, bring the matter before the general assembly and bring the terrorists' crimes before an international UN sponsored proceeding. Will the Prime Minister agree today to provide some—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, international law was invoked by the security council resolution on September 12 and action therefore by the United States or other countries who were under attack is authorized by article 51 of the UN charter. That is the position that the European Union and others have taken as well. It is not inconsistent with international law.

Furthermore, as the hon. member knows, there is no international court at the moment nor is the person accused in anyone's custody. That is a minor complication but it is hard to put someone on trial who has not been arrested.

CANADA-U.S. MEETING

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, will the Prime Minister report formally to the House of Commons detailing specifically what he proposed, what was requested and what was agreed to in his discussions yesterday with President Bush?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I reported to the Canadian people immediately following the meeting because they were very anxious to know what had been discussed.

During our discussion, the president of the United States made no request for military assistance from Canada. I told the president that if he wanted Canada's support we would support them. He was very appreciative of that fact. We also discussed some bilateral issues with regard to working together to ensure the free flow of goods between Canada and the United States. We will work together in collaboration to fight terrorism.

[*Translation*]

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, he continues to ignore the Canadian parliament.

To counter terrorism, did the Prime Minister set up a Canadian action group to make optimal use of our very special relations with the third world, the Commonwealth and the Francophonie?

If he intends to do so, can he immediately make that proposal to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, so that public hearings can urgently be held to allow parliamentarians, non governmental organizations and other stakeholders to make this Canadian initiative the strongest possible one? Will the Prime Minister open the door to Canadian expertise?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, the leader of the government in the House proposed to set up committees to review these issues. All the parties gave the names of some of their members to allow these committees to sit, except for the Conservative party, which did not provide any names. This means that these committees cannot sit because of the inaction of the Conservative leader.

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[*English*]

TERRORISM

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on Friday the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions forwarded a letter to Canadian banks asking them to cooperate with the FBI in investigating certain individuals, most of whom are already dead.

This letter makes no reference to freezing and seizing the Canadian assets of Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups, but the minister said that this letter was a notice naming the organizations that they were to go after. Where is the list of terrorist organizations whose assets are to be frozen by Canadian banks? Where is that list?

Oral Questions

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was published by the President of the United States yesterday at a press conference which the hon. member might have watched. Canada, on the instructions of the Prime Minister, proceeded immediately to speak to OSFI. OSFI spoke to the banks and the assets are frozen.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, does the government under current legislation have the power to seize and freeze the assets of groups like Al-Qaida, Islamic Jihad, the Armed Islamic Group and Hamas, all of which according to CSIS are operating in Canada? Do we have that power to seize and freeze assets?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has the power to act under the UN resolution with specific institutions and specific individuals being named. Those are the ones that were named.

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[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister said that the Canadian economy was doing well, despite the events of September 11 in the United States and the slowdown in the North American economy.

How can the Prime Minister be so out of touch with reality, when the Governor of the Bank of Canada, David Dodge, is predicting zero or negative economic growth for the next six months?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think that everyone realizes that the Canadian economy, and indeed the global economy, has been affected by the events of September 11, certainly the third and probably the fourth quarter of this year. But I will again quote the Prime Minister and all the G-7 finance ministers, who still have great confidence in the medium and long term outlook.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how can the Prime Minister, and now the Minister of Finance, justify these statements to the effect that the economy is in good shape, when we are hearing that Air Transat will be laying off 1,300 employees, that Air Canada will be laying off more than the 7,500 already let go, and that Pratt & Whitney is getting ready to slash its production? I think that it is time that he gave us a true picture of the situation and the measures he intends to take.

• (1435)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning, I spoke by telephone with the G-7 finance ministers. All agreed with our view that the global slowdown will undoubtedly have an impact on Canada in the third and fourth quarters of this year.

But we remain very confident with respect to the medium and long term outlook because of the strength of the Canadian economy and because we have our fiscal house in order, both federally and provincially.

[English]

TERRORISM

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the immigration minister admits her department started thinking about terrorists and criminals using Canada as a launching pad only after the White House released its international crime threat assessment last year.

The minister has had a full year to think about it. Why has nothing been done?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is completely wrong. We also know that everything has changed since September 11 for everyone, not just for Canada but for every country in the world. Terrorism knows no borders and no country is immune from it.

We have taken action. We have taken action with Bill C-11. We have taken action with policy initiatives. Since September 11 my department has been on the highest state of alert to protect Canadians' interests at our borders.

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the American report states that the United States faces a growing threat from organized crime groups that are using Canada as a gateway for criminal activity directed at the United States.

Today U.S. attorney general Ashcroft again confirmed those fears.

Why are we seeing a pattern of ignoring warnings, never responding in a timely manner and never implementing effective security checks?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the report that the member refers to is on a website on the Internet. It has been there for a year. When my department became aware of that, we took action immediately.

I want to say this: Canada is not and will not be a gateway. Further, last year we were the end of the road for some 1,700 individuals, criminals, security risks, who were identified and deported from this country.

Further, we have taken action to fast track the permanent resident card and intensify security screening at our borders.

[Translation]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today the Bloc proposed a motion calling for the government to consult parliament and hold a vote on any major commitment by Canada in the battle against terrorism which is taking shape.

Why is the Prime Minister planning to vote against this motion, when its sole aim is to give solid backing to Canadian decision making in the important battle against terrorism which is taking shape?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has established a very clear procedure. Before this Prime Minister and this government came to power, there was no way for the House to be consulted. We have instituted one formally.

Oral Questions

Each time troops have been deployed, members of parliament have been consulted. The Prime Minister has committed to doing that same thing in a similar eventuality this time, and we commit to that. This is a credit to the Prime Minister and his government.

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the motion we have brought before this House today is, to all intents and purposes, the same as that presented by the present Deputy Prime Minister in November 1990, at the time of the gulf war.

Why is what was good for the Liberals in 1990 not good for all the citizens of Canada in 2001?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe I will need to repeat the answer so that the hon. member and everyone else will understand clearly that we have established this system of consulting parliamentarians.

We commit to respecting it, to ensuring that parliament is consulted; it has been consulted every time troops have been deployed. We commit to doing the same thing again this time, should it prove necessary.

[*English*]

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Blackstrap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, for years the government has known that the immigration ID process has serious security problems.

September 11 makes all Canadians realize that a secure ID card is needed immediately to curb a terrorist threat.

Could the minister tell all Canadians why we should wait until 2003 for a secure ID process?

• (1440)

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the member had been listening to the last answer I gave she would know that a new permanent resident card is a priority for my department. I can assure her that it will be sooner rather than later. I have asked my deputy to ensure that it is fast tracked so that we can have it as soon as possible, but we want it fraud resistant and tamper resistant. We want to make sure that it is state of the art, but we also want it quickly.

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Blackstrap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we are happy to hear that, for we know we do have serious problems with our immigration documentation. Our documents are way too easy to forge.

Again, will the minister please give Canadians a reassurance that the government will act immediately to put a secure identity system in place?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, fraudulent documentation is something which many countries of the world are working with Canada to combat. We have experts internationally, our immigration control officers, and we have laboratories to look at documents, but one of the very important features that we have is in Bill C-11 which is presently before the Senate. Those who present a fraudulent document with an immigration application, once the bill is passed, will become inadmissible. That means they will not be allowed to enter Canada because they have presented fraudulent documentation. That is a very important provision.

Mr. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could the Minister of Transport please tell the House what steps are being taken to screen explosives at airports to prevent terrorist attacks? How can we ensure that security measures are being maintained?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have stated a number of times, we are putting in measures on a frequent basis to respond to the current security situation as a result of the events of September 11.

Today I announced that Transport Canada is purchasing advanced explosive detection systems as an aviation security measure. The purchase of this equipment is an important step forward and we have accelerated this process to respond to the current security situation as a result of the events of September 11.

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AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know we are all deeply concerned about the thousands of layoffs coming at Air Canada and hope that the Minister of Transport will consider whether a handout to Air Canada is the most appropriate response.

Will the government consider a transitional income support plan to help the people losing their jobs in the airline and travel industries? Will the government consider alternatives to a direct handout to Air Canada, like interest free loans, cutting airport lease fees or entering into discussions with Nav Canada on reducing air navigation fees? Measures like these will help stabilize the airline industry in the long term and possibly reduce the cost to airline travellers.

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to assistance to the aviation industry, I have said on a number of occasions that we have to treat everyone fairly. We are looking at the situation. We are assessing the facts. We are meeting with the airlines. We want to make sure that before any taxpayer dollars are put forward the costs are indeed justified.

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TERRORISM

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week the solicitor general gave us a very general, vague response to our concerns about bioterrorism. Today it is absolutely clear that the threat of a bioterrorist attack is greater than anyone ever imagined.

I would like to ask the government if it could give us some specific details today about what is being done to provide for a national comprehensive emergency preparedness plan, what is being done to train first responders and what steps are in place for a protocol to be followed by all regions in the event of a bioterrorist attack.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me assure my hon. colleague and Canadians that this government is moving forward on the chemical and biological front, moving in a responsible and prudent manner.

Oral Questions

In fact my department issued a paper five months ago. That is to make sure that the first responders, including the police and fire and health officials, are in an appropriate position to handle issues like this.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, in speaking about terrorism yesterday, the Prime Minister told the Americans, "These people might be your neighbour. They have cells perhaps in Canada and there is no guarantee that we can stop that easily". Yet last night the Prime Minister told his Liberal supporters that Canada will not be diverted from its overall agenda and the focus remains on health care, education and water safety.

Was the September 11 attack not enough to alter his agenda to move security to his number one immediate priority?

• (1445)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is the government. We will give security the priority it deserves. We are committed to that. However, there are other priorities in the government and we can do two things at the same time.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, here's Elsie.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has agreed to support President Bush and our allies against terrorism. A frigate and a supply ship left the port of Halifax last week.

While respecting national security, will the Prime Minister confirm before the House today that the ships are at sea as part of the Canadian forces contribution to the American war on terrorism, and will he also confirm that this was discussed with President Bush yesterday?

Mr. John O'Reilly (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence is holding consultations as we speak and the Prime Minister held consultations.

It is not our policy to discuss operational developments in front of national television. I am sure the protection and the well-being of our Canadian forces should be uppermost in our minds. We do not discuss operational developments in front of national television.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the defence minister's numbers just do not add up. He said again in the House earlier today that the government could meet its white paper commitments of two squadrons of CF-18s to Norad and one wing to NATO. The fact is, at the same time a third of the CF-18s will be down for routine maintenance and even more out of commission due to repairs.

Could the minister explain to Canadians just how he can meet his white paper commitments when in fact the numbers just do not add up?

Mr. John O'Reilly (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member is

quoting from his source, the *Ottawa Citizen*, which is usually very misleading, which also are parts of his question. Our defence policy—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. John O'Reilly: Mr. Speaker, our current strength, quite different from the *Ottawa Citizen*, is actually 58,600 out of a commitment of 60,000. That is 98%. We are at 98% capacity in the Canadian forces and we are growing every day with our recruitment program.

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the member answered the wrong question. In fact I got my information from the minister earlier in the House today.

We cannot seem to get a straight answer from the minister even on something as basic as just the number of men and women we have serving in the forces. It seems hard to come up with the straight numbers.

Canada's white paper commitments do include two squadrons of F-18s to Norad and one wing to NATO. Considering repairs and maintenance, just how can we possibly meet those white paper commitments because the numbers simply do not add up?

Mr. John O'Reilly (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 98.1% is what the current strength of the forces is and what our commitment to the white paper is.

We have more CF-18s now than we had during the gulf war. We have more trained pilots now than we had during the gulf war. That party should be praising the hard work of the Canadian forces, not denigrating it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a few minutes ago, the government House leader told us that there would be consultation before troops were sent.

Two minutes later, the parliamentary secretary told us that there was no way that operations would be discussed.

Perhaps we might know if there are any representatives from the Liberal Party who are interested in informing members of the House of Commons? That is my first question for the government House leader.

• (1450)

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member is asking a question about the involvement of parliamentarians.

A debate was held last Monday, a debate was held last Tuesday and a take note debate was held on Thursday. Today, there is a motion before the House moved by one of the member's colleagues, on the same subject.

The Prime Minister answered all of the questions. I, myself, on behalf of the government, stated that in the event that troops were to be deployed, which has not yet been done, of course, there would be a debate in the House.

Oral Questions

I think that that is clear enough.

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in response to the government House leader, I would say yes, there has been debate, but what we want is a vote. That is what they themselves advocated in the past.

We would like an answer to the following question: did the boats that sailed from Halifax do so as part of the operations in support of the Americans or was this a routine operation? That is what the public and members of the House of Commons would like to know at this time.

[*English*]

Mr. John O'Reilly (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about operational readiness of the Canadian forces. We are talking about deployments that are done on a normal basis as part of our NATO commitment.

We do not discuss operational deployments in the House of Commons or anywhere else where CNN wants to broadcast or give more locations or more information to terrorists who may be quite interested.

* * *

TERRORISM

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, today not the *Ottawa Citizen* but the *Regina Leader-Post* is reporting that the RCMP and CSIS are investigating a suspicious person who knew nothing about crop dusters trying to buy a crop duster just prior to the September 11 attack.

Given that the United States has already moved to secure the airports and airplanes in this area, and given the need to enhance security, can the Minister of Transport tell the House what he is doing to make sure that crop sprayers are not going to become the next weapon for terrorists?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our aviation regulations apply to every aircraft in Canada, including crop dusters. We are well aware of the events in the United States and the actions taken with respect to crop dusters. We are following similar measures in this country for the protection of everyone.

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the *Toronto Sun* and NBC News have both reported that box cutters were found on board a Toronto-Newark flight on September 11. Air Canada confirms that a plane returned to Toronto and that a post-landing search prompted further investigation.

The American government has been open and honest about the real nature of the terrorist attacks and the threat that it is facing since September 11.

Will the Minister of Transport either tell the press, like his colleague did, that they are wrong or confirm that there was a Canadian connection to the September 11 attack?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has asked this question two or three times

in the last week and I have given him a consistent answer. We do not discuss specific security issues as they arise with respect to the safety of planes.

I would ask the hon. member to once again check his facts.

* * *

FOREIGN AID

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members on the other side of the House have been calling for a review of, or a stop to, government funding that is assisting the millions of starving people in Afghanistan and surrounding countries. They are claiming that the funds could end up in the hands of the Taliban.

Would the Minister for International Cooperation tell the House what she and her department are doing to ensure that this does not happen?

Hon. Maria Minna (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, the allegations that were made by the member opposite were totally irresponsible. We do not give money to the government, let alone the fact that the Taliban was never recognized as a legitimate government by our country. Second, the \$1 million that went for humanitarian aid went to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for displaced people, Afghans in Pakistan.

Quite frankly, we cannot allow millions of people to die of starvation. This is a humanitarian issue and it is our responsibility. We cannot turn our backs on them.

Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Afghanistan, Syria, Sudan, Iran, Iraq, and North Korea are all known as states that sponsor terrorist organizations. Last year alone the federal government gave financial aid to each of these countries totalling over \$35 million.

Why does the government talk tough about terrorism while it supports those who sponsor terrorist groups?

● (1455)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had listened to the previous answer by the minister, he would have understood that we might disagree with governments but when people are starving and we can help, it is the duty of the Canadian government and the Canadian people to help them.

Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, Canadian Alliance): Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, and if there was some reason for justification with confidence, then we could probably support that position. However, CIDA's own internal audits have repeatedly shown that the government and the Prime Minister do not have control over where Canadian taxpayer money earmarked to aid the world's poor actually ends up.

Canadians do not support terrorism. Canadians do not support countries that support terrorism. What is the government doing to ensure that it is not supporting terrorism with Canadian taxpayers' money?

Hon. Maria Minna (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find this line of questioning totally horrendous.

We do not support terrorism. All of CIDA's programs are audited. The programs are delivered through non-governmental organizations like CARE Canada, which was in Afghanistan prior to September 11. It was feeding 60,000 women and children, providing loaves of bread. We were not giving money to anyone. Money does not go into the hands of anyone. It is non-governmental organizations that are providing food to people. That is humanitarian assistance. It is not in any way supporting terrorism.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during his testimony in committee, the minister responsible for official languages co-ordination said:

If the rate of assimilation were 65%, it would be discouraging.

However the rate of assimilation of francophones in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan is over 70%.

If the minister is discouraged by a rate of assimilation of 65%, it is urgent that he take action. Will he therefore lay out for us, as the official languages commissioner has requested, his plan of action and tell us what resources he intends to devote to changing this state of affairs?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will try to explain the figures to the member once again.

When two francophones marry, they pass on their mother tongue to their children 95% of the time.

When a francophone marries a bilingual anglophone, they pass on the French language to their children 73% of the time.

When a francophone marries a unilingual anglophone, the percentage drops to only 35%.

The government is determined to strengthen bilingualism and the official languages in Canada. We will do this in a united Canada because that is the only way it can be done.

* * *

SCIENCE AND RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Gérard Binet (Frontenac—Mégantic, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for Science, Research and Development.

Federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for science, research and development met last week in Quebec City to discuss matters of common interest.

Could the secretary of state tell us what came out of this meeting?

Hon. Gilbert Normand (Secretary of State (Science, Research and Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last Friday, in Quebec City, the federal, provincial and territorial ministers of science met for the first time since 1992.

All the provinces and territories were represented there and all supported Canada's objective of doubling investment in research

Oral Questions

over the next 10 years and of becoming the fifth country in the world in this field.

In addition, everyone agreed to promote high level training, the marketing of knowledge, the establishment of broadband Internet, innovation throughout Canada and an improvement in indirect costs to research.

* * *

[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister said that his government would not be diverted from its overall plan to focus on health care, education and water safety. Even in light of the recent events in the United States, as immigration was not part of the original overall focus of the government, what exactly is the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration doing to get her portfolio on the focus table?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the hon. member that Bill C-11 is at the Senate. It is having hearings next week.

I have asked the Senate to ensure that the bill is passed as quickly as possible. It contains important tools for my department so that we can more quickly identify and streamline our procedures. Everyone knows that at the present time it takes too long, and we feel it is an important tool for us to do what needs to be done for all Canadians.

* * *

● (1500)

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. The minister has said he is looking at whether or not Air Canada might need some assistance in this difficult time.

If he determines that Air Canada needs assistance, would the government consider taking out some equity in Air Canada in return for cash to the airline, which comes from the Canadian taxpayer?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could take that as a representation from the hon. member. However, we are looking at all aspects of this file to see what is justified, relating of course to the fact that Air Canada had some difficulties which were well known before September 11, and to see how the crisis of September 11 impacted upon it specifically.

We must not forget there are other airlines in Canada and everyone has to be treated equally if we are to assist.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in May, a parliamentary committee unanimously proposed improvements to the employment insurance system.

Yesterday, the government responded, saying that it would wait until the end of the period set by regulation to give its answer.

Supply

Today, in the face of the obvious signs of an economic slowdown and in view of the urgency of action, will the Minister of Human Resources Development acknowledge that the time has come to implement these unanimous recommendations by the committee in order to help workers who have been the victims of the recent layoffs?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I want to assure the hon. member and tell him that the employment insurance program is sound and it will be there to support the Canadians it is intended to support.

Our most recent monitoring and assessment report indicates that 88% of Canadians in paid employment would be eligible for benefits if they need them. Having said that, the government continues to make improvements in the program, and we need look no further than Bill C-2 for indications of that approach.

* * *

TERRORISM

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in light of the statement by David Harris, the former CSIS chief of strategic planning, declaring that it is guaranteed the terrorists are coming and because of the government's severe cuts to coast guard, naval, army and air forces affecting British Columbia, what is the government doing to restore emergency response services in the British Columbia region of Canada?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is a little unclear in his question. Is he talking about emergency response at the airports, which of course has been under some discussion for two years? A draft regulation, Cars 308, is being gazetted and is subject to review? If that is what he is talking about that, I think I just answered his question.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, the right hon. Prime Minister's response to a question from the right hon. member for Calgary Centre indicated wrongfully to the House that in some way the Conservative Party was holding up the formation of committees. That is not in accord with the facts.

In fact, a number of committees have met and under the standing orders, Mr. Speaker, you would be aware that these committees remain in effect for 10 days. I would not want the Prime Minister not to be given the opportunity to correct himself on the record, since this is clearly misleading the House.

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if that is a point of order, but Standing Order 104(1) says:

The said Committee shall prepare and report to the House within the first ten sitting days after its appointment, and thereafter, within the first ten days after the commencement of each session and within the first ten days after the second Monday following Labour Day, lists of Members...

That time limit is only three days away. We are waiting for the list of members.

The Speaker: There is clearly a disagreement about the facts and there is nothing the Speaker can do to resolve that matter. The members have had their say, and we will move on to orders of the day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1505)

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—RESPONSE TO TERRORIST ATTACKS

The House resumed consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot.

[Translation]

Today, I want to speak to the motion put forward by the Bloc asking, and I quote:

That this House urge the government, in any reprisals taken in reaction to the terrorist strikes in New York City on September 11, not to commit Canadian armed forces in any offensive action until the House of Commons has been consulted and has voted on the matter.

First, let me take this opportunity to extend my condolences to the families of the victims, to wish a speedy recovery to all those who were injured but managed to survive and to express my great regret to the American people who were affected by these evil acts perpetrated not only against their country but against all of us.

[English]

The government shares the views of all hon. members that the tragedy in the United States has been and is the immediate priority for the House. That is why the first order of business when the House returned on September 17 was a special debate on the tragedy in the United States, not just the debate after the adjournment hour, not just the so-called emergency evening debate, but in fact the government order of the House, which was followed by a vote.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the House leaders of all parties for agreeing to the format which eventually resulted in the vote and the transmission to the United States congress of the *Hansard* of that day, expressing our condolences, our heartfelt support and of course our commitment to eradicate terrorism. I would also like to thank my colleagues on the other side of the House.

The House debated the issue again on September 18 with an opposition day motion from the Canadian Alliance.

We had a special take note debate on September 20. Again, the opposition asked for, and which the government agreed, a special debate in the evening so that all hon. members could put on record their feelings, their thoughts of this historic moment. For the members who had not had the opportunity to express their condolences, this was another mechanism by which they could do so.

In total, 24 hours of debate took place and 85 different members of parliament spoke on September 17, 18 and 20.

Today's debate is the fourth on the U.S. tragedy in the first six days of sitting of the House since we returned after the summer recess. That does not include members' questions and statements under Standing Order 31, some of them as late as today, regarding this terrible tragedy.

In addition, I know that Canadians have been pleased that their members of parliament have been debating this issue in the House of Commons. Indeed, my constituents spoke to me about my own remarks when I was in my riding over the weekend. More particularly, I received a scroll signed by thousands of people, at the Rural Expo and International Plowing Match, in which Canadians expressed their wishes of sympathy and solidarity, which I intend to present to His Excellency the Ambassador of the United States of America.

The government's respect for parliament and the views of parliamentarians on foreign policy issues reflects its red book number one commitment to expand the rights of parliament and to debate major foreign policy initiatives.

We on the government side oppose today's motion because it, first, breaks with Canadian parliamentary practice and it deals with a hypothetical situation. Notwithstanding what has been said, there has been no troop deployment in a theatre of action as of yet, and there has been no request in that regard, as we all know.

• (1510)

I believe that it would set an unworkable precedent tying the hands of government when it comes to the timeliness and effectiveness of deployment of Canadian forces, whether in peace time or otherwise.

In the Canadian parliamentary system the responsibility for troop deployment lies with the government. Since 1950 there have been 50 peacekeeping operations of various sizes. In most cases parliament was not even consulted at all, and the previous government failed to allow any voice in the initial decision to deploy Canadian forces in the lead up to the 1991 gulf war. It is important for Conservative members of parliament to know this.

[*Translation*]

Second, it is important to point out that there was no parliamentary consultation about our entry into the Korean war. Even in 1939 there was no resolution declaring war on Nazi Germany.

Parliamentary approval was shown in 1939 through support for the Speech from the Throne and the defence estimates. It is a far cry from the consultations we are now carrying out.

Supply

Also, there was no vote and no consultation at all about the declaration of war against imperial Japan.

[*English*]

As I mentioned earlier, our government has changed all that. We changed the previous government's approach and other governments approaches too. We sought the views of parliamentarians on major policy issues.

We all remember the paper produced by the parliamentary committee in 1994 and 1995 concerning the role of our Canadian Armed Forces and our foreign policy. It was an excellent report. It was the role of this parliament and its committees. We have ensured that parliament has a voice.

We have had many special debates, which in parliamentary jargon are called take note debates. There was one as late as last Thursday. Were there to be a troop deployment, I commit myself today, on behalf of the Prime Minister and the government, to have such a debate again.

The question of combat troops outlined in today's motion is clearly hypothetical. As late as yesterday, Canada was not even formally requested by the United States, not even informally, for such a participation.

At the present time there is no UN, NATO or U.S. request to deploy Canadian troops to respond to the events of September 11.

[*Translation*]

As I said earlier, the Prime Minister promised, and I made the same commitment, that parliament would be consulted through debates in the House. I would also like to remind the House that, in the past, there was no vote on any of our peacekeeping missions.

Let me also add that today's motion by the Bloc is almost identical to the motion also put forward by the Bloc on April 19, 1999, concerning Kosovo.

So, things have not changed. The Bloc is reiterating what they said in 1999 and the government is answering the same way it did the first time around. Of course, this is a different parliament so, technically, this is the first time it has to deal with this issue. However, as I said before, we all realize that it is about the same issue.

[*English*]

The energies of the House are best directed at considering how to respond to the U.S. tragedy, not through engaging in procedural wrangles.

[*Translation*]

I therefore urge all my hon. colleagues to vote against the motion brought forward by the Bloc.

• (1515)

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his speech, but I am not very proud of what I have heard.

Supply

Sending troops on peacekeeping missions throughout the world and sending troops to war are two different things. We realize that the decision process and the needs are not the same.

What the government House leader is telling us is that the government will decide as it has always done, without consulting the House.

I think it is important to point that out. In his own riding, he will have to answer to members of the armed forces, their families and concerned citizens who will be telling him: "Look, you cannot make such a decision without consulting us".

So, does he intend to listen to what the people of his own riding have to say and to go along with their requests?

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the question asked by the hon. member. She represents a riding close to mine, just a few kilometres away. Several of her constituents work in my riding; the reverse is true as well. Therefore, we both know quite well the residents of that area.

However, she should not try to make me say what I did not say. I never said that the government will be making a decision, and I quote "without consulting the House". In fact, I said quite the opposite.

The hon. member might want to go over the official report of the House of Commons debates, in *hansard*, in due course. I know this is something she often does. She must find reading *hansard* as fascinating as I do. When she gets the chance to review today's debate, she might want to correct what she just said.

We do intend to consult the House if troops have to be sent out. Since we have yet to receive such a request, the government does not expect to have to make any decision soon. We have not reached that point yet, and we do not know if we ever will.

[*English*]

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I commend the House leader for his remarks. I only have two questions. I am sure he has done some research on this subject, or it has been done for him.

Is there any precedent in the Parliament of Canada for either house endorsing or granting a resolution or permission to the executive branch to engage in a military action? He mentioned the second world war and I am wondering about other actions such as the first world war, Korea, et cetera.

Would he be willing to entertain a general resolution of support for the executive in whatever decision that it needs to take similar to that recently passed in the U.S. congress. It did not take the power out of the hands of the legislature but allowed the legislature to support the executive in these military actions.

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I will deal with the second proposition in case I do not get around to the first one for reasons of time. In terms of a general resolution of whatever nature the McGrath committee report of 1985 permits the opposition to propose motions in the House on anything. The government does not automatically defeat these motions. As a matter of fact we supported a number of them.

If the hon. member across and his colleague want to indicate support for the government on any issue, which I wish they would at all times as a matter of general principle on this or any other issue, they are quite free to do so.

In terms of the consultation and votes in the past there have been a variety of forms. In the majority of cases there was no consultation at all. There were cases where parliament was recalled, an issue was mentioned in the throne speech and the House voted on the throne speech. That constituted a form of consultation. In other cases it had to do with voting under estimates of the defence department and so on. There were a variety of ways in which that has manifested itself in the past.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. government House leader's remarks with respect to the issue of consultation. There has been ample opportunity for members of the House of Commons on both sides to discuss this issue in detail and to put their condolences and remarks on record.

However with respect to actual consultation and input the Prime Minister referred in question period to the fact that he had read all the comments. That is speculative and it is a bit reminiscent of the conversations that he had with homeless people.

The government House leader will recall that in October 1990 there was a government order put before the House of Commons, in which he participated, where the House of Commons was asked specifically among other things about the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. It went on to allow for a vote which is the exact request on this supply day.

Does the government House leader recall participating in that vote and will he give members a similar opportunity to do so?

• (1520)

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member referred to actual input. The comments of his leader last Thursday were input. Perhaps some members after reading the speech would consider that it was not much of an input, but I happen to think it was a meaningful contribution. I am sure the Prime Minister read what was said, as he said he did, and considered it for what it was worth.

As to the government order voted on, there was a government order last Monday that all parties voted on. I answered a question put by a member of the Alliance earlier today stating that the opposition is quite free to put through on opposition days any proposition before the House. Providing that there are voting days left in a supply period, propositions may be voted on whether they are for or against any issue that the government is involved in, including troop deployment.

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a little liberty with the actual wording of the motion before the House today and talk about response rather than retaliation because I have been increasingly concerned about reports in the press about Canada's alleged lack of preparedness in the event that terrorists resort to chemical and biological warfare weapons.

As members may remember from earlier interventions that I have made in the past, I am in fact in a former life an expert in chemical and biological warfare weapons and their development. I wrote at one time what was considered the definitive book on the development of these weapons during the second world war. It came out in 1989 and still remains on the syllabus of most military academies across North America, if not across the world.

The reason it would be a Canadian that writes such a book is because Canada was the first to do experiments on the development of biological warfare weapons. The very first field trial to occur anywhere in the world occurred on Balsam Lake in Muskoka in 1940. It was conducted by Sir Frederick Banting who was the inventor of insulin.

In the course of the war Canada went on to develop various types of germ and biological warfare weapons including the mass production of anthrax. This was done at Grosse-Ile downstream from Quebec City. The main research station was in Suffield, Alberta, where Canadians later in co-operation with the British and Americans developed various types of weapons including experiments with botulinus toxin, tuleremia, ricin and various other weapons. The reason for this was because during the second world war it was feared that the Nazis would employ chemical or biological warfare weapons but in fact they did not.

In the post-war period this research continued in Suffield and in various other parts of Canada and continues to this very day. The important point to bear in mind is that Canada not only began in this field before any other nation but it continues to be a major player in this form of research, the idea being that we have to know the weapons to develop the countermeasures.

Canadians have developed the most sophisticated automatic detection machine for determining whether biological warfare agents are in the atmosphere. We lead the world in this. It has been with a lot of concern that I read the newspaper and see reports suggesting that Canada has no expertise in this field, which is simply not true.

More important, because of my background and expertise in the history of the development of this kind of weaponry, the Minister of National Defence and the Solicitor General of Canada asked me in 1999 to consult with their officials and review the state of Canada's preparedness regarding the use of biological or chemical weapons by terrorists.

The two ministers put at my disposal experts from their ministries. I had a meeting that involved people from the solicitor general's office, the defence department and Emergency Preparedness Canada. There was a representative from the biological and defence review committee and there were others. They were very candid with me and they appreciated that they did not personally have the kind of expertise that I could bring to the table on this issue.

I produced a report that found there was a disconnect between Canada's expertise in the use of countermeasures against this type of weapon and the possibility of a civilian occurrence.

By 1999, I should explain, all western nations had become very alarmed about the possibility of a CBW terrorist threat. CBW stands for chemical biological warfare. The reason was because there was an attack with nerve gas in the Tokyo subway system in 1995 in

Supply

which a few people were killed and a lot of people were injured. That event sent a chill around the world. It made all major western nations realize that they were probably very vulnerable to this type of attack and that the new age terrorists might resort to it.

• (1525)

The Americans immediately made a very major investment. I believe they are investing some \$3 billion into trying to create security measures that could respond adequately to this type of attack. Canadians do not have \$3 billion but, and this is great credit to the solicitor general and the Minister of National Defence, they are aware of the problem and immediately wanted to take measures to do something about it. I produced a report and the ministers acted upon that report.

In the two years intervening, much planning and much thought has gone into a co-ordinated response across the various departments that would be engaged: defence, the solicitor general's department, anti-terrorism, and Health Canada, because all of this of course relates to the control of dangerous biological agents. One of the outcomes was the creation of the office of critical infrastructure preparedness which was announced by the government earlier this year.

This is all to say that efforts have been put in motion. Just to demonstrate that I am not just talking through my hat, I would like to read a little bit from a letter that I received from the solicitor general on March 21, 2000. As he is familiar with me, he addressed me by my first name. The letter reads:

Dear John:

Thank you for your letter of February 18, 2000, informing me of the results of your meeting with Mr. Leonard Hill, First Secretary at United States Embassy here in Ottawa.

I appreciate and agree with your suggestion that this department host a Canada-United States round table on the issue of chemical and biological terrorism. In fact, I am happy to be able to report that we are holding a joint Canada-United States tabletop exercise here in Ottawa, April 18-19, 2000, under the auspices of the Canada-United States Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) Guidelines that were signed on May 26, 1999.

He goes on in the letter to say:

I should also point out that the CBRN Guidelines are designed to facilitate the provision of the type of assistance noted by Mr. Hill, should either of our countries be the target of a CBRN terrorist incident.

As you are probably aware, this will build on the extensive work on chemical and biological terrorism that we already engage in with the United States.

The point of this letter is that we are in very close contact with our major ally on this issue.

I just want to read a few excerpts from a confidential letter from the solicitor general that was sent to me on May 10, 2000. I cannot read it all to the House because it does deal with some details that he has asked me to keep in confidence. He said:

Thank you for your letter of April 4, 2000, requesting an update on progress towards co-ordinating the government's response to the threat of chemical and biological terrorism. Since we met on February 9, 2000, I am happy to be able to report that we have made progress in developing options for a strategy to strengthen national counter-terrorism response capability.

He goes on to talk about the various inter-departmental meetings that have been organized. The two key sentences I would like to read say:

Supply

The Department of National Defence now has a representative working full time with the counter-terrorism division of my ministry.

In other words, we finally have synergy between the experts in the Department of National Defence on chemical and biological warfare and the solicitor general. He finally said:

The issue of funding remains a challenge and we are still seeking solutions.

That last sentence is important because I think we have come a long way, but one of the difficulties that I know these two ministers had, which they could not report to the House, was the difficulty of persuading their cabinet colleagues to put the money on the table as necessary to provide not the infrastructure, because we have that, but the basic equipment. We do not have enough out there to fully have the kind of protection that the CBW counterterrorism plan calls for.

Again, it is not cabinet's fault. I remind the House that up until the terribly tragic incident that occurred in New York, no one in the House was talking about the threat of chemical and biological terrorism. There were only a few of us who were even aware that the danger existed so it is not surprising that the funds were not available to these two ministers who, I have to stress, on their own initiative sought to build a program that would be at least in place. It is in place now, thank heavens, but they do need funding. They were not able to get it at the time and at a sufficient rate. I would dearly hope that while we as Canadians do not need the billions that the Americans are spending, a few million would do nicely.

• (1530)

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would like the member to clarify something he said as he was finishing. He said that the reason this chemical biological warfare issue has not been addressed in the House of Commons was that the ministers did not have any leverage to get money to help fund the research into this.

Certainly in my mind the government should be aware that these dangers do exist in the world. As the government, and as part of the security and well-being of Canadians, whether or not it is a hotly debated topic on the floor of the House of Commons, it is still a realistic concern and a problem in the world, surely it should be addressing that and putting some resources into it.

Perhaps the member could clarify this. In his mind, is it not the duty of the government to protect Canadians regardless of whether it is a hot topic at the moment?

Mr. John Bryden: Mr. Speaker, I would like to think that the Prime Minister runs a cabinet that is relatively democratic. The reality is that a year or six months ago if I had made the speech I made just now in the House and suggested that the government should be spending millions of dollars on counterterrorism along the line of chemical and biological warfare weapons, I probably would have been laughed at in the House.

This threat has been around for the last 10 years. Most advanced nations of the world have been aware of it. The problem is that it seems like something out of fiction. It is very hard to persuade people in their normal walks of life that this is a genuine danger because it is a very arcane and unusual danger. I should add that it is a very improbable danger. It is not a high risk situation.

It is not surprising that the ministers concerned might have had some difficulty persuading their cabinet colleagues to put money on the table. Right now I do not think there is any argument that the money should be put on the table.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member, who is not a member of the executive of this government, if I would be right in saying that democracy would be greatly improved if a vote were to be taken after a debate on this most important issue.

Since he is not part of the executive, how does he feel about this unanimity on the opposition side? What does he think about the fact that all members are in favour of this motion?

• (1535)

[English]

Mr. John Bryden: Mr. Speaker, I am reminded of the fact that the American president has the right to order out the military of the United States, but he has to seek the approval of congress to maintain any kind of use of the military.

For a Canadian prime minister to order out troops initially, he still has to come back to parliament. I do not see where there is much difference between the Prime Minister's power in the way he would act in an emergency like this and that of the president of the United States.

[Translation]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Neigette-et-la Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my party's motion reads as follows:

That this House urge the government, in any reprisals taken in reaction to the terrorist strikes in New York City on September 11, not to commit Canadian armed forces in any offensive action until the House of Commons has been consulted and has voted on the matter.

I agreed to participate in this debate because since September 11, our individual and collective, freedoms, economic as well as political, have been shattered. I remember several headlines in the newspapers. One in particular said that "On September 11, 2001 at 8:45 the face of the world changed".

The world changed on that day and we still have trouble going back to the normal rhythm of our lives. We cannot forget that horror. The breath of the tragedy is almost undescrivable and unfortunately we are also witness to what I would call an overdose of information in the media.

For two weeks now we have been seeing the same picture of the plane crashing into the second tower and hearing the noise it made. I have nightmares about it. I wake up and see that plane and hear that noise and still find it horrible.

We were convinced that no democracy was invincible but what strikes us is the fact that we never thought that such a horrible attack could happen on American soil. We were hoping never to see that in our lifetime. Since September 11, we have even had to change our vocabulary. We have had to change our collective conscience with regard to what is happening.

Supply

The motion we are presenting is totally fundamental in a democracy. Incidentally the Liberals tabled an amendment to the government's motion during the gulf war. I believe it was the member for Saint-Maurice who was then leader of the opposition, or maybe he had not yet assumed that position. However when the then Minister of external affairs tabled a motion the Liberals amended, what did that amendment say?

The amendment moved by the current Deputy Prime Minister said this:

That this support shall not be interpreted as approval of the use of Canadian Forces for offensive action without further consultation with and approval by this House.

The current Deputy Prime Minister, who was then sitting on the opposition side, had this to say:

Liberals insist that before Canadians are called upon to participate in any offensive action, such participation must first be brought before Parliament and voted on here in the way it was done at the time of the Korean conflict.

This is just common sense. This amendment is common sense, it is consistent with democracy and with the rights of members. As representatives of Canadians and Quebecers, we have the right to vote on whatever our government will decide to do to support the fight against terrorism.

Unfortunately, we have to admit that the rules of the game are somewhat outdated. At the time the Conservatives did not see fit to accept the amendment moved by the Liberals, who were then in opposition.

Therefore today, we should be dealing with reasonable, intelligent members who use their common sense and say, "When we were in opposition, we wanted a vote in parliament, so now that we are in power, we will lead by example".

● (1540)

It feels like watching kids play, irresponsible individuals totally unable to change their minds because when they were in the opposition, they did not get their way.

I hope the Prime Minister will give it some thought and that his government will support this motion and give us the opportunity to have our say and debate the issue, should the executive he heads consider dragging us into a war.

We do not know against whom, where or for how long. We ask questions and, in the course of the same question period, we get conflicting answers from different ministers.

How do you expect the Canadian people to trust their representatives? How do you expect the Canadian people to find it worthwhile to have members of parliament and all that it entails to have people who sit here all day long trying to accomplish something?

Why do you think people believe that being involved in politics serves no purpose? Because there is only one person who is playing politics here; the Prime Minister is the only one who went to Washington, where he was asked for nothing, and came back here.

Of course, for the time being, he does not have to consult us because nothing was asked of him. If there was a request, what possible scenario could we be facing?

If the past is an indication of the future, it seems to me that the Liberals, when they were in opposition, had asked for something that made sense. Today, they should grant us that very same thing, but no, they will not.

I am concerned when the government leader rises in the House during oral question period to tell us not to worry because since the Prime Minister has been in office, his government has developed a new system and we now have a new procedure, a new process. There will be consultations.

This government does not know what consulting means. If we look at all the acts under which it has an obligation to consult, which make it mandatory for the government to consult the provinces and territories, we see that the ministers responsible do not meet with their agents, their counterparts in the provinces and territories, to consult them, seek their opinion or ask them how they see things, rather it informed them of the decisions it has made. This is the way every single minister operates. This is what happens in every single department.

We do not trust that we will be really consulted. This is the tragedy. Not only do we want to be consulted, but we want to have the right to vote because we represent the views of our constituents and they, at least some of them, are asking us not to go to war.

In Quebec, the polls are very clear: we have always seen things differently. While terrorism must be fought and ways will have to be found to put an end to it, this does not necessarily mean we have to go to war tomorrow morning.

● (1545)

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, like my colleague, the member for Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis, I too believe it is right to want to have a say, as parliamentarians, on the involvement of this Government, of Canadians who might be called upon to augment military forces in the Middle East.

We have been elected and we have a responsibility. We have been given the mandate to get involved in debates, knowing what our values are, what we are voting on and what the bills we pass are all about. The current government does not seem to want to consult us, when this is precisely what is expected of it.

The significance of this debate has to do with the vote that would be given to every political party, every member of parliament. The appalling tragedy of September 11 hit home and made us reflect.

The generation I belong to has not lived through a war, but my father's generation remembers only too well the bitter fruits of armed conflicts.

The World Trade Center and the Pentagon tragedy robbed us of our innocence and made us aware of how vulnerable we truly are.

Once we get over the horror and bewilderment caused by the attacks, we must avoid rushing into the retaliative actions that are being considered .

Even if the terrorists responsible for this attack did it on behalf of a particular people or religion, they were condemned by every legitimate representative of the Arabic and Islamic communities of the world. Today, every peace loving human being is in mourning.

Supply

If, today, every one of us is a little bit a victim, it is equally true that, as human beings, we too bear the responsibility of the sin that was committed. Which people, which religion, which cause has not had its extremists?

Human stupidity is not the exclusive purview of one colour, one language, one gender or one religion. Extremism can be found anywhere. It is blind and it strikes indiscriminately. It does not care about justice and innocent people.

The victims in New York are the innocent victims of hatred. It could have been anyone else, in any country of the world. It could have been our brothers, our sisters, or a relative. This is why we must stand together with the American people through these difficult times, but also with every other people of the world who is a victim of injustice.

What should we do then to counter these unconscionable and unjustified attacks? Should we retaliate by firing on a crowd? Of course not. Vengeance for the sake of vengeance would only increase the level of hate and jeopardize peace in the Middle East and in Asia. Should we deal with the root causes of this evil, that is the racism and the intolerance that are often latent in all kinds of conflicts? Force is not always the best of guides.

Some conflicts are lingering throughout the world, and we should look into them to try to find long term solutions. If they are not settled, they will prevent us from concentrating on fundamental problems that undermine any lasting peace in the world.

At the beginning of a new century, with instant communications, we can no longer put our heads in the sand and act as if we are not concerned because all this is happening elsewhere. The attack on New York proves the opposite.

Take for example what happened at the world conference against racism which took place in South Africa last August under the aegis of the UN. The conference bogged down on semantic issues between the actors involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

It is evidence that as long as there is no peace in the Middle East, more people like bin Laden will be ready to die for their cause.

• (1550)

The American tragedy has had a much greater impact than all those forgotten conflicts occurring elsewhere in the world. Naturally, the immediate cause of last Tuesday's attacks is the escalation of violence in the Middle East. However the deeper cause is the despair and frustration which breed hatred.

If we are so directly affected by those attacks, it is because, for the first time, they happened on our continent. I say for the first time because it was in fact the first time such a tragedy happened after a long and well orchestrated preparation. The problem will never be solved with a simple show of power.

Yesterday, after a meeting with the president of the United States, the Prime Minister of Canada said that the president did not ask Canada for military support. However, he added: "If they need us, we will be there". Yet, to resort to armed forces without trying to get to the root of this terrorism will only postpone the solution to this problem. Even worse, it could make things worse.

This morning, professor Albert Legault of Laval university wrote that the fight against terrorism is first and foremost a matter for the police and intelligence services. That is why we are asking the government to consult parliament before calling on the armed forces.

Thousands of Quebecers and Canadians have sent letters and e-mails to members of this House to let them know about their fears and concerns. Here are a few examples.

"With acts of pure vengeance, do we not run the risk of provoking an escalation of violence?"

"How can we be sure that this operation to which Canada could be associated will eradicate all terrorist groups?"

"If Canada totally aligns its policy on the American one, won't Canada also become a target for terrorists?"

"If we bring about a general mobilization of forces in Middle East countries, will we not create ideal conditions for a regional war elsewhere?"

On the morning of September 11, 2001, the west woke up to a brutal reality. The horrendous attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon have proven that a great terrorist threat hangs over the world, just as some people have been saying for many years, but we called them prophets of doom.

The government must be prudent and, for the time being, focus its efforts on the security of our citizens while preventing terrorists from using Canada to prepare attacks on the United States.

As to the roots of the present problem, it is time that we get out of our comfort and indifference. Let us try to achieve a lasting resolution to all the regional conflicts on the planet. Let us promote justice and solidarity among the nations. This is why we want the government to approach the problems differently in the House.

When we want a real dialogue, discussions have to be forced by the opposition. It should rather be up to the government to question all the members of the House, to consult with the leaders of the various opposition parties, raise the issues, including the negotiations underway with the United States and the other countries.

The open and democratic thing to do would be to let parliamentarians participate in this debate, a debate that can be described as urgent and life changing for many Quebecers and Canadians, should we be called up or called out on service.

I hope that we will see a change in the attitude of this government and that we, parliamentarians, will be able to vote on an eventual participation.

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague from Québec for her speech. Naturally, women are often quicker to develop an awareness.

In the coming weeks and months, every one of us, each parliamentarian will be personally approached by peace groups or concerned individuals who do not necessarily long for a war and who wish we would respond in a different manner.

In fact, President Bush already started, through economic measures, by freezing the money of some terrorist groups in order to prevent them from proliferating, and our Prime Minister said he would do the same.

Is my colleague not worried to see the very democracy of parliament, indeed our rights as elected members of this place once again compromised because the government will not let us debate in the House the possibility of sending out troops to war?

• (1555)

Ms. Christiane Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my colleague for her question. As the government House leader said earlier, debating is allowed, but what we are asking for is to vote on the involvement of Canada in the counterattack that is being prepared by the Americans. I believe that the members of all the opposition parties would like to have a say on this decision—

An hon. member: Before it is made.

Ms. Gagnon:—before it is made. We know that that is not what the government seems to be saying on the question as to whether parliamentarians will be allowed to vote in the House on the issues and on Canada's participation.

Effectively, as my colleague said, this will have an impact on the people. If many Canadians and Quebecers are called on to participate in battles, all parliamentarians should be able to respond in a responsible manner to the people in general to find out how Quebec and Canada will be involved and what these people will decide with respect to the involvement of their children. It is usually the young who go to war and they are often involved in deadly battles.

If parliament would allow us to get involved in a responsible manner, this would make us very happy. I sincerely hope that the government will change its position and find it urgent not only to let the House discuss the matter, but also to let it vote on the issue.

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate my colleague for her excellent speech and her very accurate and precise representation. However, I wonder if she does not have the impression she is talking to the deaf when addressing the party across the way. This party, as we know, sings two different tunes: one during election campaigns and another when it is in power.

There is no lack of examples. Suffice it to say that in order to win the election the government promised to scrap the GST. After the election, it forgot all about that promise.

The Liberals promised to drop the helicopter project, but after the election they bought helicopters at an even higher price. When they wanted to defeat the Clark government, they promised to eliminate the 18 cent tax on gas, but after the election they raised it by 65 cents.

This party has always sung two different tunes. It did the same on the copyright issue and on economic and cultural matters. It says one thing during the election campaign and another once elected.

Supply

Members have mentioned it in this case and my colleague also said so when she stated that when they were in the opposition, the Liberals had promised, asked and begged the government to consult the House before making a decision on the use of our armed forces or on any military action.

As soon as they took power, they did the exact opposite of what they had promised. They suddenly hid the red book under the table as if it did not exist anymore. Promises are made to win elections. For the rest, the government does not care about Canadians, parliament and members of parliament. It does as they wish.

That is what surprises me and this is what I want to ask my colleague about. Is she not surprised that Liberal members from Quebec, especially those like the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord who have gone to the other side, who switched parties in order to have an influence from within, to have a strong voice and defend the interests of Quebec and its population, have nothing to say? They catch the Liberal members' disease the minute they join them and they lose their tongues and change their speech. Is the hon. member not surprised to see that once again?

• (1600)

The Deputy Speaker: I still have to ask the member for Québec to be brief in her answer.

Ms. Christiane Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, briefly, I am not at all surprised. Whenever federal members from Quebec are elected, whether Liberal or Conservative, they soon forget what they had promised Quebecers, which was to be their mouthpieces and to defend Quebec's interests.

In this debate, we should pressure the government. The Liberals are currently in power. Members should bring pressure to bear so that there can be a real debate followed by a vote on this urgent matter.

[*English*]

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Mississauga West. I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to the motion today. Canada has a long and proud history of helping the global community defend peace, freedom and democracy. We have always been committed to working alongside our allies in creating a stable international environment. We will continue to work with our allies in the new struggle against terrorism.

We also have a strong tradition of consultation in the House. In times of conflict over the years we have come to the House to consult each other, debate and discuss the deployment of Canadian forces to troubled regions around the world.

Since 1994 in matters of defence and foreign policy the government has demonstrated its commitment to consultation time and again. This has been true with respect to Kosovo, the Central African Republic, Somalia, Haiti, Zaire, the Balkans and others. The list goes on.

Supply

In the last session of parliament we had an emergency debate on Kosovo. The debate began around 10 o'clock and went on into the early hours of the morning because we wanted to hear from each and every member on all sides of the House.

As the full implications of the terrorist attacks of September 11 continue to unfold we must be mindful of our responsibility and our promise to stand shoulder to shoulder with the United States and our allies, and we are mindful.

As we have said many times over the past two weeks, this was not just an attack on the United States but an attack on all civilized nations. In one of his first speeches to the American people President Bush said it was an attack not just on Americans but on democracy and freedom loving people everywhere.

The same message was reiterated a day or so later by Prime Minister Blair of the United Kingdom. It is the same message that was conveyed by our Prime Minister last Monday.

We stand by our allies and strongly support the decision to invoke article 5 of the NATO charter. We reaffirm our commitment to the alliance and to the principles of freedom and democracy that guide us.

The United States, as we all know, is working to develop an appropriate and strong response to the attacks. However it is still in the planning stages. It is still in the process of determining how the war on terrorism should be handled.

Before acting Canada must first know the details of the American plan and the approach of our other allies. As the Prime Minister stated yesterday and as was reported on the news, the U.S. has not indicated what its needs are. It has not yet asked Canada for a contribution. When it does we will assess what our contribution can and will be.

At this time a plan to debate and vote on any future deployment of Canadian forces would be purely hypothetical and, I would submit, premature. In the weeks and months ahead we will work closely with the United States and our allies to determine how Canada might best contribute. I reiterate that the U.S. is still formulating its plan.

As was said in last week's debate on the issue, we do not expect the campaign to be run by conventional methods of war because this is not a conventional war. People may ask what the difference is. War is war, after all. What is conventional and what is unconventional? There is a distinction to be made.

Almost immediately after the attacks on September 11, parallels and analogies were drawn to the attack on Pearl Harbor. President Bush was urged at the time to respond immediately in the same way the Americans responded to the Pearl Harbor attack.

However let us be absolutely clear: this is very different from Pearl Harbor. When Admiral Yamamoto attacked the U.S. fleet President Franklin Roosevelt knew exactly who the enemy was and where the enemy was to be found. We are still determining who the enemy is and where the enemy is situated.

● (1605)

As we have heard from many reports around the world, there are perhaps 40 to 60 countries which harbour terrorists and in which terrorist cells exist. It is not just one nation against another.

This unconventional war will require the collaboration and assistance of countries all over the world. We must be prepared for a sustained, intensive and concentrated effort that uses all the tools at our command including diplomatic, military and economic ones. That is why it is unconventional.

I assure the House that Canada will not rush into decisions concerning our response without thorough and balanced consideration. We have been faced with an outrageous and egregious act of terrorism. We are angry but we must not let our anger affect our judgment. The government will not issue a *carte blanche*.

However at the end of the day the government will provide the resources necessary to allow Canada to play a clear and significant role in helping the United States and our other allies in the intensive campaign against terrorism. We must remember that this is a war against terrorism around the world.

We have a team of professional and dedicated people in the Canadian forces who stand ready to be part of any international coalition against terrorism. We should use this opportunity to say how proud we are of our armed forces.

There is a saying among soldiers that when interpreting instructions one should think about what the commander wants to accomplish and then carry out the instructions in a manner that would best effect the mission. At the same time the soldier does not consult the superior officer at every step. In the long run he or she is responsible for meeting the expectations of the commander and accomplishing the goals of the mission.

We can apply this analogy to our government. We have listened to the citizens of the country and they have given us our mandate. We debated last Monday. We debated last Tuesday on an opposition day. We debated last Thursday. What has been so wonderful is that we have given all members of the House an opportunity to voice not just their own opinions but those of their constituents. The list has been so long that not every member has had an opportunity to speak. With motions such as the one put forward today by the Bloc we can continue to consult with our constituents and give their views to the House.

However let us face it. It is up to the government to make the difficult decisions that will allow us to accomplish our mission. They will not be simple decisions. They will be difficult decisions and they will be made after consultations. To make them we must remain flexible. We must be able to react quickly and effectively yet prudently, and we must choose wisely from different options and avenues.

Supply

On the subject of flexibility, members must understand that there are times when we must act immediately. Can one imagine recalling the House simply to note that there had been an attack and to ask whether we should let American planes or international flights land? There are times when one must act quickly because time is of the essence. We will not always be able to call everyone together to decide these things and micromanage what is important.

While we maintain our commitment to ongoing parliamentary consultations in the face of this and future conflicts, we must always weigh that commitment with our responsibility to our friends and allies.

Our Prime Minister met yesterday with the president of the United States. During that joint meeting he reiterated to President Bush that we are neighbours, friends and family. I know many members of the House who have friends, family and relatives in the United States.

The Prime Minister said we would work together with the United States to build a coalition to defend against terrorism. He emphasized that Canadians support the struggle. He told Mr. Bush quite unequivocally that when the U.S. needs us we will be there, and we will.

• (1610)

We will continue to consult the House but we will also act responsibly and decisively. We will honour our commitments to our NATO allies and to our Norad partners. We will stand by our allies and we will not let the evil forces of terrorism win.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick (Prince Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I support the motion. However I believe that it is an academic discussion. Ex-military people like General Mackenzie have said that we are unable to provide any direct contribution in terms of a combat role should that happen. Another ex-military person said that all we can do is to put three frigates in with the American fleet. We do not have the capacity to get involved in a combat role. In that sense the debate is academic.

I wish we were debating the measures we need to take so that we will not be caught with our pants down the next time around. There have been many years of neglect, decline and drift by the government with respect to national security and our military, and we are paying the price for it today.

What are some of the things we can do in the interim besides what my colleague on the other side has mentioned? We should be starting tough anti-terrorism measures in Canada. We should see what is feasible and what can be implemented. We should also be seriously looking at, from an economic and social standpoint, what we can do with our perimeter to keep dangerous people out of North America and to limit this risk.

The government has the majority and it controls the agenda. Why could it not strike a committee that would actually look at anti-terrorism measures without a precondition that we have to get total unanimous consent from the House?

Ms. Sarmite Bulte: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. The important thing about the government and the reason I am so proud to be a member of the government is that it likes to act on consensus. That was one of the things we said in our Speech from

Throne, that we want to consult with Canadians, listen to the debate and the things that our colleagues on the opposite side have to say.

It is surprising that the hon. member on the opposite side asked why we do not strike a committee to look at anti-terrorism. Last week the government House leader stood and suggested that we do exactly that, and it was the opposition party that refused to give unanimous consent.

The hon. member talked about conditions. The official opposition's motion about working on anti-terrorism legislation was full of preconditions. A war against terrorism requires a multi-faceted approach. It requires many things such as diplomacy, a look at the economy and possible military action. However all these things must be looked at carefully.

We cannot act alone. This is not a war against one particular country. It is not a conventional war. Canada needs to play a pivotal role and ensure that we talk to our international allies and our partners to discuss how best we can work together to combat terrorism. That is the key thing we need to attack, not other countries. We must work together to combat terrorists wherever they may be.

• (1615)

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, today's debate goes beyond the motion put forth by the Bloc Québécois. It is about the very essence of why we are in the House from all parts of the country. We are here to debate and to vote on issues. That is what the House is all about.

In times of crisis like the events of the last couple of weeks Canadians are looking to the government for leadership. Canadians want their representatives to debate, to vote and to support the government on issues that would make us feel more secure. Take note debates are really an excuse for not having real debates in the House.

The government has a majority. What harm would debating and voting on issues in the House have on the government?

Ms. Sarmite Bulte: Mr. Speaker, it is important to remember what happened in the House since the September 11 attack. The first day the House resumed there was an emergency debate. It was opened by the Prime Minister, followed by all the leaders of the other opposition parties. That was then followed by members debating what happened.

The next day, with all credit to the official opposition, the opposition made it its opposition day to further talk about how we could deal with this international attack against terrorism. Members were given an opportunity to exchange views, to consult with one another and with different parties.

There was an opportunity again when the opposition asked for a take note debate to have input into what the Prime Minister should say to President Bush—

The Deputy Speaker: I believe it is time for me to give an opportunity to someone else to speak.

Supply

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague very eloquently put forward some very valid points. She was about to refer to a comment by the member from whatever that organization is, the coalition. I am having trouble keeping track. I think she was about to refer to a comment attributed to the leader of the fifth party in the House, in 1990, which I will paraphrase. He said, during a debate in this place on a decision with regard to the gulf war, that we cannot wait for deliberative bodies to deliberate and act before taking action.

The hon. member made numerous references to the responsibility of the government of the day to act within the constitution to either deploy troops or make substantive decisions that were in the best interests of national security. That was then and this is now. I appreciate the fact that the person I am quoting was at the time under a different understanding of what his responsibilities were.

Let me say first of all that I have been saddened somewhat, as we all have been, by the events of the past two weeks, but particularly saddened, in addition to viewing the tragedy that we have all seen, by some of the reactions of people both in this place and in the media. There is one group in this place that I think has acted responsibly. I have criticized those members in the past for some of their policies and actions but I will not at this time. In fact I congratulate them today because I believe they are acting in the best interests of all Canadians when they use their role as members of an opposition party. They are the members of the Bloc Quebecois. It is perhaps a surprise to many of us that this has happened. We might have expected it from other sectors or other people in this place, but in reality their responsibility has been shown by questions in question period, by speeches in debate that focus on the real issues here, the issues that Canadians are concerned and frightened about. They have not all been lobs by any stretch. They have not simply issued a blank cheque supporting the Prime Minister or the government to do as he or it pleases and it is appropriate that they do not.

We all know that the image Canadians have of parliamentarians standing and voting on whether or not to send troops into war is an image that we hoped would never happen, even if we were to agree with it. This is indeed an unusual time in our history, a time when calm resolution is being displayed by our leader and by the leadership of the entire government. What is interesting is that there is now a sense in this debate that the government might act too hastily.

Up until now we have heard particularly from the official opposition that the government is not acting hastily enough, that somehow we should be doing what the Pakistanis and the Afghanis are doing and mustering our troops on the border of perhaps the United States, packed and ready to go. This sense that the government is not taking action is purely partisan politics. What is sad about it is that we are losing the benefit of celebrating what Canadians have done by focusing on debates such as the one today and on comments made by people in this place and in the media. Members should think back to what happened. We closed our skies and our airports virtually immediately.

On the day it happened, after I witnessed the tragedy on CNN and was as dumbfounded as everyone about what I saw, I had a meeting

at the Credit Valley Hospital at 11 o'clock that morning and I thought that I might as well go because I had to do something.

● (1620)

I was absolutely astounded to see that the hospital was in full emergency planning mode. So was Etobicoke General Hospital. The reason is that there was a rumour, white hot, at 11 a.m. on September 11 that at least one of the planes being diverted to Pearson international was a hijacked aircraft that could turn into a bomb or a missile. What did they do? These people reacted instinctively, calmly and professionally to ensure that all of their staff were aware of the problem and were capable and ready to take action in case of an emergency, in case injured people showed up at the emergency department of Credit Valley Hospital or Etobicoke General. That is a responsible way to act. That was not led by a government. It was under the leadership of Wayne Fyffe and his entire team at Credit Valley Hospital.

We should be celebrating that instead of all the sniping and political posturing that is going on in what I can only say is an unfortunate attempt to hold somebody on this side of the House, aka the Prime Minister, responsible for all of this.

A member opposite accused someone over here of blaming the United States. I have heard members on all sides and I have heard and read media reports that actually blame Canada, actually blame our immigration policies. Our immigration system is not perfect. In fact there are members of the House who sit, or did sit on the immigration committee when we brought in Bill C-11. I recall the complaints from the official opposition critic that the bill was too tough, that we were violating civil libertarian rights and that we were taking away the rights of people to appeal a deportation order just because they were found to be criminals. I heard members from all parties. I expect the former opposition critic for immigration had moved on to another committee, but I am sure these were orders coming out of central party command on what they should be doing in relation to the immigration bill.

If members have heard the latest media report, that bill has been delayed. Why? We held hearings right across Canada on the immigration bill to tell people that it was time we toughened up our immigration laws to ensure that people who are criminals and people who are under deportation orders are actually deported.

The hue and cry from the Canadian Bar Association, propagated in many cases by members opposite doing their jobs as critics which I respect, was quite remarkable. Now those same critics sit here and somehow say, as they do every day, that it is awful that our immigration system is the cause of all this. That is the implication. Do we really mean that when we look all of the immigrants in the eye? Some of them are in this very place. Do we not recognize that immigration is indeed what has built Canada?

Supply

Should we be shocked that there are terrorist cells within our borders? Could someone please name one country where that is not the case? I doubt that they can. From what I have seen, Osama bin Laden's network is in some 30 to 40 different countries, and that is only one terrorist group. Of course there will be people within such an open, democratic, welcoming country as Canada who are not here for the benefit of you and me, Madam Speaker, and who are not here to try to build a nation. They are here to further their own interests whatever they may be. Whether they are based on religious fanaticism or political fanaticism, the bottom line is that we know it is fanatical.

The sad thing here is that we are missing the point. There will be debates in this place throughout the entire process. It will be a long, drawn out process to eliminate terrorism and attack terrorism around the world.

●(1625)

I am confident that our government will do what is right. I just wish that we could, like the Americans have done, pull together as one great nation, as one great political entity so that we know where the enemy is. The enemy is terrorism. It is not over there, it is not over here. It is in fact terrorism and we are committed to stand with the Americans to eliminate it from the world.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague opposite, who said he heard members say this, that or the other. However, I think he forgot to answer the question that was put to him today as to whether or not he approves the motion presented by the Bloc Québécois, which simply says this: "Do you agree to consult the House of Commons before making any military decision, as your party has been asking in its program, the red book, since 1993?" That is precisely what the Liberals were asking that the Conservative government do when they were in opposition.

We are simply asking that the Liberal government not change its tune and apply the same principles. Is the hon. member in favour of democracy or not? That is the issue.

Bin Laden did not consult parliament. He did not consult any parliament. He decided, surrounded by a small group of fundamentalists, to send people here and there to carry out military actions.

Have we gotten to the point where the Prime Minister of Canada and his MPs would like to follow that example and send parachutists to one location and a small military group elsewhere on the sole basis of the Prime Minister's decision, without consulting parliament? I hope not. Are we or are we not a democracy? That is the question that is being asked today.

Members were elected democratically. Now, are they prepared to act democratically in this parliament, to respect the people by consulting those who represent the people in parliament? Are they prepared to consult the people before deciding to take any action whatsoever? It is that simple. The answer is yes or no.

We do not need speeches on what you heard over the last month or what happened over the last two weeks. Are you in favour of democracy, yes or no?

●(1630)

[*English*]

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Madam Speaker, yes, I am a democrat. I actually think the member is correct, that I did not answer the question because, Madam Speaker, you started telling me I was out of time, much to my surprise.

The answer to the question is that I am not prepared to support the motion. That does not mean I am not a democrat. In fact it is the obligation of this government to govern. It is also the obligation, and there is clear precedent, to ensure that there are debates. If the hon. member is unhappy with my remarks, then that is his problem, not mine. It is my responsibility as an elected official, democratically elected in Mississauga West, to put my viewpoints forward on behalf of the people whom I represent, so that they understand what it is their representative is doing and saying in Ottawa. That is what I spoke about.

To suggest that at such a critical time we should turn the reins of power over to a vote in the House of Commons simply runs in the face of our Constitution which clearly vests the responsibility with the Prime Minister and the cabinet who indeed are the government. All of us can then decide whether or not we support the government. I can assure everyone that I will be supporting the government.

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC/DR): Madam Speaker, I will try not to use as much rhetoric as the hon. member for Mississauga West. He said that he wishes all members of the House could have pulled together when this incident happened on September 11. We would have loved to. In the United States the Republicans, the Democrats, the house, the senate, the administration did because they knew in which direction they were heading. We have no idea to this day in which direction we are heading. If the Prime Minister and the government would like to tell us, we would love to be able to pull together and support it. Put it on the table, let us have a vote on it and we will support it.

The member stood up and said he trusts the government. My question is, why would I trust the government? What has the government done to date to make us trust it on this issue? What has the Prime Minister put in the store that I should trust him and the government to do?

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Madam Speaker, there are many things the government has done. The Prime Minister has remained focused. He has remained calm. He has remained in communication with the White House.

What he has not done is charged down the street with his bayonet fixed. He has not risen to the taunting and the political posturing that has been coming from the other side, and sadly, from some in the media. He is showing the kind of leadership that Canadians want. They want to know that he is calm and resolute. He has clearly said in this place and elsewhere in the media that he will stand shoulder to shoulder with the Americans to fight terrorism and we support that. I would have hoped that members opposite would have supported it as well.

Supply

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ): Madam Speaker, first, I wish to extend my condolences to the families and friends of the victims from my riding, from Quebec, Canada and the free and democratic world, following the September 11 attack.

For the benefit of our fellow citizens who are listening, the motion, as proposed and amended by the Bloc Québécois, reads as follows:

That this House urge the government, in any reprisals taken in reaction to the terrorist strikes in New York City on September 11, not to commit Canadian armed forces in any offensive action, or any financial resources, until the House of Commons has been consulted and has voted on the matter.

This is an unprecedented situation and it must be dealt with seriously. We have been and continue to be intensely affected by the attacks, despite the fact that we all wish to go on with our lives.

One has to admit that it is impossible to get through this crisis without debating the matter in this House, making decisions and holding a vote in the House. This analysis and these decisions are the responsibility of the whole House. That is democracy.

Duly elected representatives of the people have a duty to debate issues, question the government and vote on important questions like the one at hand as to whether the Canadian forces should take part in any offensive action.

The attacks of September 11 were directed against all democratic nations. The terrorists were clearly targeting our democratic symbols. We have such symbols here. We are living in a democracy and we must do everything in our power to keep it that way. This involved taking decisions following a debate and a vote in the House. That is democracy, our democracy, at work.

The terrorists wanted to destabilize and annihilate us. As a matter of fact, they wanted to destroy our liberty. It is that liberty that we have to maintain in a clear and explicit fashion. All democratic countries have to affirm this in an eloquent and unequivocal fashion.

It is our duty to confront terrorism and to do it on our own terms, through debates followed by a vote in the House. Our response has to be of a political, diplomatic, economic and social nature. A military intervention should not be the priority, not without having first clearly identified the perpetrators of these attacks.

More important we must not participate in any military operation that could put innocent lives in danger. We must not act like the terrorists.

Therefore, no decision should be made without having first been debated and voted on so as to clearly show that conflicts can only be settled through democratic means.

We practice democracy by debating in this House all decisions to be taken by government and then having a vote. The House of Commons, that is us, and decisions are made by the house as whole, and not by the executive. Our decisions must be representative of our constituents, well thought out, sober and justified. We must be sure of our actions before we act. We must not respond to fear with offensive military operations before a vote is held in the House of Commons.

It is out of respect for our citizens that we must take steps, here in this House, in their name and according to their will. That is democracy and that is what the parliamentary process is all about. We must not change our way of life.

It is the same for parliamentary debates and votes. Changing our way of life and encroaching upon our freedoms would be like capitulating before the fanatical and murderous terrorists.

This is exactly what the terrorists want. We cannot yield to fear and panic. It is the same for parliament and the House of Commons as a decision making body.

• (1635)

Our decisions must be representative, reasoned, sensible and justified. We must be sure of our actions. We must not react to fear with a futile and destructive spirit of revenge.

Rather we should make sure our reaction to these barbaric acts reaffirm our will to safeguard our freedoms. We must show that our democratic parliamentary process is efficient and essential. How can we prove it? By confirming what we were elected for, namely to represent our constituents.

We represent the people in the House and they clearly want us to react to terrorist attacks by making a decision following a debate at the end of which a vote will have been taken in the House, while taking into account the concerns of our constituents and fellow citizens.

It is also with our constituents in mind that we should take appropriate and improved security measures. However, these measures must never impede our freedoms. Otherwise, terrorists could believe they managed to scare us and force us to react out of panic. It would be too much like their way of doing things. We have built democracy by acting with balance, in the spirit of duty and within the rule of law. We must continue to do so. We must make sure democracy is respected by showing that it is here to stay.

Our choices should not be based on considerations of security, but rather on society. We all agree that the perpetrators of these murderous attacks should be held accountable before the courts. In order to do so, all diplomatic, political, economic and social options should be put forward. Indeed, the military option should be considered, however, it should be set aside as long as possible.

Military action should be taken only after debate and a vote in the House of Commons. That is what our parliamentary system is all about. We debate, then we vote. This is democracy.

The House has to make sure the measures implemented in response to the attacks do not endanger the lives of innocent people. We should not follow in the steps of terrorists. We should rather show them that democracy and freedom have nothing to do with ignorance, obscurantism and violence. Obviously, an exclusively military response would not solve the terrorist threat.

No security measure, no army can defeat terrorists who have no respect whatsoever for human life. The government is looking into actions that will affect all Canadians. These actions are of utmost importance. What is at stake is the life of the Canadian people. It is a serious matter.

Our response should be unwavering, and we should respond through the democratic process. In our democracy, we must have consultations followed by a vote. True, our life should go on, but so should democracy. How can we make sure democracy goes on? By consulting with parliamentarians, by debating issues of concern for the public and all citizens, and by having votes in parliament. We are the people's representatives.

We agree that life should go on, but that implies protecting our freedoms. We protect them through a dutiful application of the democratic process in elections and consultations. Openness is at stake. It is normal for us to be free in our daily lives. Democracy is also something we take for granted. We will find the normal course of our life again if we can be sure the democratic process will still be there and will still be respected. Consultations and votes in parliament are part and parcel of our freedom of expression and representation.

Terrorist groups do not have this advantage. To the contrary, they have to trample over the basic rights of all societies. Unlike them, we respect the rights and freedoms of our fellow citizens. Consultation is an integral part of democracy. Voting on government decisions is a way of strengthening democracy. That should be our true response to terrorist attacks.

•(1640)

[English]

Mr. Paul Szabo (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think the member spoke very well, but I do have a problem.

I will ask everyone to picture this. The World Trade Center has been attacked and 5,000, 6,000, 7,000 people, who knows, have been murdered. President Bush asks the Prime Minister to come to an urgent meeting in Washington the next day to lay out a strategy and asks for military support. The Prime Minister tells the president to hold that thought because he has to go back to Ottawa in order to convene parliament and have a discussion with House members on whether or not Canada will participate and support its allies and friends. That is the preposterous nature of what is being proposed here.

The member said in his speech that we should debate whether we would deploy military forces in any action. I think he mentioned civilian risk and that there are degrees of that and no guarantee that people will not be hurt. The question for the member is whether he believes that perhaps this discussion should not be a discussion on a specific event such as the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington but rather should be a debate in the House.

The question for the member is whether in fact the motion should have said in the event that a situation occurs where our NATO allies or friends request military action, what are the rules under which the House would ask the government to guide it in its decision making

Supply

so that we can in fact participate in a timely and constructive fashion?

•(1645)

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Lanctôt: Madam Speaker, this is an important question. As was done in France and Argentina, we want to vote before the fact on whether to deploy troops. What could be more democratic? We do not want only to debate, we want to vote as well.

In an emergency situation like the one the parliamentary secretary just referred to, and we are indeed in an emergency situation, we can plan what we want to do. It is important to debate the matter and vote on the different ways to commit Canadian forces, either by a deployment of troops or by the approval of an offensive action by the army.

It is also a question of the money that will be available, the financial means that will have to be introduced. We have to be able to debate the matter and to vote on it in the House of Commons.

As for the example given by the parliamentary secretary on the urgency of the situation, what do we do if something happens? We have seen what happened during the attacks.

We have to be ready. We hear it everywhere. Everybody is saying that we were not ready. The democratic world was not ready. The free world was not ready.

We have to talk about those things and have a vote to determine our priorities and exactly when Canadians will be ready to engage in an offensive action. Will they ever want to do so? I hope government members will be listening to Canadians and Quebecers.

It is important for the government to listen to these people. How can they get the attention of the government if not through their representatives? The Liberal members across the way were elected and are their representatives. They are not just members of the government. Every single one of them is a member of parliament, a representative of the people who elected them. If they do not listen to their representatives, what do they do? It is not for the executive power to make decisions as important as this one.

If, tomorrow morning there is an emergency, they have the authority to act. However they must not forget that parliament can be recalled on an emergency basis. The House of Commons can be called back at any time. We can debate and make a decision.

It is important that we keep up the fight to be able to vote in the House of Commons.

[English]

Mr. Shawn Murphy (Hillsborough, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I agree with the hon. member. On a decision like this, the government should consult the House and the issue should be debated at length. Every member of the House is entitled to be heard and every member should be heard, but I am at a loss as to how the motion would work.

Supply

The motion calls for the government to not commit the Canadian armed forces to any offensive action until the House of Commons has been consulted and a vote has been held. Would the deployment of four or five specialized persons call for a motion in the House, or the whole armed forces being sent to Afghanistan? Where do we draw the line?

As well, is the hon. member aware of any other democratic countries, based upon the Westminster model, that would require a vote in the House before the deployment of armed forces?

• (1650)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Lanctôt: Madam Speaker, on the issue of whether to send one, two, three, four or five soldiers, or none, we must be careful. We should not become terrorists ourselves.

Let us not rush the debate. If the action was to be an offensive one, let us show how important democracy is. It is not up to one group of people, the executive, to decide. It is up to parliament, to the House of Commons. We are a democracy.

A vote has to be held. Numbers will not determine whether it is important or not. It is the offensive nature of the action—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but he has run out of time. The member for Matapédia—Matane.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Châteauguay, who just spoke, even though he took some time away from me. I think he spoke with so much energy and passion that it was worth it.

He conveyed very well the idea I wanted to start my speech with, which is that the Bloc motion is a simple matter of respect for democracy. I believe that parliament ought to be consulted and that each member be allowed to express in a vote the opinions and wishes of the people they represent.

As the hon. member for Châteauguay aptly pointed out that we represent the people. We must therefore make decisions on behalf of the people, and thus we must be consulted and have the right to vote.

In this debate, I also heard members say that our democracy ought to preach by example. I have heard this time and time again. If we really wish to preach by example, as others mentioned, it has to start here, in this parliament. It is here that we must show how democracy works and the government must allow the elected representatives to vote on the issue.

When I became aware with people all over the world of the events in New York on September 11, I was struck by the sheer magnitude of this tragedy. Thousands of men and women had their physical integrity denied or lost their lives.

It is easy to imagine the horror that filled their soul. Like many of us, I thought about those who watched on TV the death of their husband or wife, or friends.

I thought about fathers and mothers who lost a daughter or a son. I thought about children who watched on TV the death of their mother or father.

While we watched this immense tragedy unfolding before our eyes, our first reactions were stupefaction, the disbelief that other human beings can do such a thing and destroy so many lives for a cause. I do not think any cause can justify such acts and the sacrifice of so many lives.

After these first two reactions, stupefaction and disbelief, the third one is probably anger, and that is what we witnessed. However anger is blind and it often makes us do things we cannot justify afterwards.

When anger subsides, we should look for causes. Why is mankind capable of such acts? How can people commit such crimes? I am not in any way tempted to justify these actions. They have never been acceptable and they never will be.

We should face the fact that this kind of action is not new. The attacks on September 11 have been more spectacular and dramatic than previous incidents throughout the world, but for decades our democratic societies have been the target of repeated terrorist attacks.

For decades, not one year has gone by without us seeing a new war being fought in some part of the world. With the new millennium, with the fall of the Berlin wall, the men and women who live on this planet had a new hope, the hope that mankind was heading toward a new era, an era of possible peace and prosperity for all.

If the 20th century gave us two world wars, my children, our children had the right to expect that mankind would have finally understood that war and violence lead nowhere.

• (1655)

Of course, we have the right to self-defence. The attacks of September 11 call for a response, not vengeance but a response.

Those responsible must pay the consequences. Democracies must take measures but they must not act blindly. As democrats, we must use all the means at our disposal to ensure that these kinds of actions do not happen again or at least to try to prevent them as much as possible.

Over the last few days, we heard many speeches in the House. However few members addressed the real causes of the tragedy of September 11.

The greatest tragedies are born of poverty and misery. Throughout the world, millions of human beings live in poverty, which creates the conditions that lead to dictatorships and terrorism.

Poverty exists even in our country. It may not be as apparent as in certain third world countries or fourth world countries, as some would say today, but it does exist.

There is a huge disparity between so-called industrialized countries and poor countries. There is a huge disparity between rich countries and poor countries, as well as between various regions of our country.

The Bloc Québécois wants democracy to be respected. This is the sole objective of the motion introduced in the House today, that is the respect of democracy.

The people from Quebec have elected members to represent them in the House. These members represent the people of their ridings. It is this right to representation that we are requesting today through the motion that has been put before the House.

It is nothing but the right to represent our people and to present their views that we are asking the House today.

We do not accept the fact that Canada, as a democracy, can commit to an action without first having given parliament the chance to vote, without having consulted with its representatives.

We are only asking for the respect of our values, of the values of all Quebecers and all Canadians.

I want to reiterate that the democracies and the rich countries will have to share their wealth, to spend more in assistance to developing countries and to support the democratic nations around the world.

● (1700)

[*English*]

Mr. Lynn Myers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to contribute to the debate today because I think it is very important in light of what is being talked about and obviously in terms of what is happening in the world. We see the ramifications that are taking place and I think it is important that we in the House do in fact have the time to debate these very important issues.

I think it is fair to say that on September 11, 2001, the world changed, for Canada and for everyone. The September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the aborted hijacked plane in Pennsylvania were not just vicious attacks on the United States, our closest friend and ally, but rather they were cold hearted, calculated attacks on our way of life and upon democracy itself. They offended what the world and global community of just and democratic nations and law abiding and tolerant peoples hold dear and precious. We have to make sure that we understand fully that they call upon us to defend our most precious and cherished values and our freedoms. It is at this time that we do precisely that.

It is also fair to say that all Canadians have been profoundly affected by the nature and the scope of the attacks. One hundred thousand Canadians gathered to share their grief on Parliament Hill. As we know, that event was widely televised. Canadians from all across this great land of ours opened their hearts and their homes to over 30,000 passengers and crew from over 250 flights stranded in Canada on that terrible day. Canadian firemen and firewomen and relief workers are helping with the recovery and the rescue in New York City as we speak.

However the time to mourn is over. As President Bush noted when he ordered the U.S. flags back to full mast, now is the time to act, not in haste but with determination and resolve. That we will do in

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concert with our American friends. Let there be no doubt about it. Canada stands in solidarity and in sympathy with our American friend, our partner and our ally. We stand shoulder to shoulder with the U.S. in this campaign against terrorism. Together we will use all lawful means at our disposal to bring those responsible to justice, including extradition or prosecution of those suspected of terrorist crimes.

Last Friday the Minister of Foreign Affairs met with the secretary of state, Colin Powell. Yesterday our Prime Minister met with President Bush. They discussed how we can work together to forge the coalition and the campaign against terrorism and how we can work together to better protect the citizens of our two countries.

Our security in its broadest possible political, economic and military sense is inextricably linked to the United States. We can never forget that, not just because of NATO or NORAD, not just because we share a common border or the world's most important trading relationship, but our common values and political ideals bind us as well as our willingness to defend those very ideals.

The Prime Minister and our foreign affairs minister assured the president and Secretary of State Powell of the full support of the people of Canada and our government. As both Secretary Powell and President Bush noted, they never had any doubts about the commitment and the support of their brothers and sisters in Canada. Those are their words. Both said how touched they have been and appreciative they are of the actions and the solidarity of the people of Canada.

We, along with a broad coalition of countries, are now launched into a long campaign against terrorism. President Bush and our Prime Minister have both cautioned that there will be no quick and easy victory, that we must root out the evil that exists without creating a new army of dedicated extremists. That too we will do.

We must be precise and be prepared to use all of the tools at our disposal, diplomatic, legal and financial, as well as military resources, to combat this evil. Our answer must be sober, well judged and well thought through, but also resounding and resolute in its approach.

The discussions that our foreign affairs minister had with Secretary Powell on Friday and those that the Prime Minister had with President Bush yesterday indicate that the administration of the United States of America is clearly on the same wavelength as we here in Canada.

● (1705)

We stand, then, shoulder to shoulder with our American friends. They know that a variety of tools is necessary, that it is important to build a wide coalition of governments, that it is important not to act hastily but to act with great foresight and planning and the wisdom that requires.

They recognize that this campaign against terrorism involves diplomacy, intelligence and police work, and the preparations are methodical, both on their side as well as ours. We have given that kind of co-operation and will continue to do so in the best interests of not only the people of Canada and the United States but of freedom loving people wherever they exist in this world of ours.

Supply

The campaign has begun. The United Nations General Assembly and the UN Security Council have both underlined, in their forceful condemnations of these attacks, that the perpetrators of this terror and those who abet or harbour them will be held accountable, and justifiably so.

The United States of America together with Canada and other allies have moved to invoke article 5 of the NATO charter for the first time in the 52 year history of the alliance. This step indicates and underscores the iron resolve of all of our members of the NATO alliance to act individually and collectively in self defence against this evil in full compliance with the United Nations charter.

In addition, Canada and the United States of America share an extremely close defence relationship based on our common defence of the North American continent. Our forces are fully capable of working with American military units across a broad spectrum of roles. That we are prepared to do when we are asked to do so.

In his meeting with President Bush, the Prime Minister also focused on the vital necessity of forging a broad coalition against terrorism. The Prime Minister assured the president that Canada will support the United States of America in every way, using our special relationships in the Commonwealth and la Francophonie to rally as many countries as possible to the effort against this terrorism.

In that, Canada is well positioned. We have an historic and great tradition in these matters in terms of how we can help. We in Canada are prepared, and the Prime Minister has indicated thus, to follow through on that very important matter.

In the meetings with Secretary Powell and the Prime Minister there was a strong appreciation of how our two countries collaborate together and are ready in the combat against terrorism in North America. Canadian agencies, for example, such as the RCMP, CSIS and immigration, transport, and customs, enjoy already close and intense working relationships with our American counterparts in those areas.

No two countries work more closely in ensuring the safety of their citizens. President Bush and Secretary of State Powell were appreciative of how our security services and police are playing their full role in this crisis. I think it is worthy that the House from time to time recognize the great work that our people do in this regard, our security people, our police services, at whatever level and in whatever capacity. It is a great service they provide, not only for the safety and security of our communities, our neighbourhoods, our towns, cities and villages, but also in this trying time they provide the kind of co-operation that is required, important and needed.

We will do more. The House is well aware of the legislation we have been working on in the area of immigration and to permit ratification of the convention on financing of terrorism. We have other legislation ready to permit ratification of the convention on terrorist bombings, for example. These instruments will guide our way forward. We welcome the appointment of Governor Ridge as homeland defence secretary. The Prime Minister indicated to the president our desire to invite the secretary to Ottawa as soon as possible after his confirmation. This will allow us to deepen our sense of security and our sense of co-operation with him in that very important role.

We know that President Bush and Secretary Powell, without prodding, understood the potential damage to our economies if our borders were to become sealed and why it is important that we work together to ensure that our border remains a model for the world.

● (1710)

A fluid but secure border is critical to our economies. Again, that is very well understood and we will be working very hard in the next little while to ensure that it carries on. If we do not do that, then those evil terrorists win. We must look at how to find a common approach to enhancing security at the border while still facilitating the vital flows between our two countries that are critical to our economies but always guided by the principle that Canadians are guided by Canadian law and Americans are guided by American law. That is a strong division and a strong and sacrosanct principle. That is something we will carry on with.

Canada's alliances have always been freely entered into as befits a strong and sovereign nation such as Canada, a sovereign nation that has never hid behind an isolationist or pacifist sentiment; a sovereign nation that has made common cause in war and peace with our fellow democracies to defend our peace and security and the values we cherish as a multicultural democratic society and a free people. We do so again, always in compliance with international law.

Since 1993 we have had the practice of consulting parliament before we involve Canadian forces in military operations and we will continue to observe this practice. In the aftermath of the crisis the government has kept parliament fully abreast of the situation. On Monday, September 17, the House debated a special motion on the tragedy. This included discussion of efforts at NATO to respond collectively through the invocation of article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

On Tuesday the House debated the strategy during the opposition day as well, including what took place on September 11, and had a special take note debate last Thursday on the Prime Minister's meeting with the President of the United States.

The events of September 11 constitute a horrific crime, in fact countless crimes. Canada must act in concert with others using all lawful means to bring those responsible to justice. Before we discuss the possibility of participating in military action let me underline that we have had no request to date from the United States for a Canadian contingent and that no decision has been taken by our government yet to deploy Canadian units in the campaign against terrorism.

We would want to consult with parliament before any such deployment would take place. However it stands to reason that there will be circumstances where the government will want to maintain flexibility, obviously to respond quickly to emergency situations.

As we ponder whether there is a role that Canada might be able to play in this campaign, I am sure that parliament will want to provide our ally, the United States of America, with all the assistance that is appropriate. I am convinced as well that the House will want to do what is necessary to protect Canada.

The United States was not the only victim in the attack on September 11. We too have suffered a great loss. Hundreds of citizens from Canada and other countries died on that day as well and there are thousands of families across the world who have suffered.

What I am saying is this. This is a horrific time for us to be going through. I think the Parliament of Canada understands that. Certainly the government understands fully that this is a time of great sorrow but also a time where we have to act in concert with our American allies, and that we will do.

I think the last couple of days have shown that again and again in terms of the bilateral meetings that took place between our Prime Minister and President Bush. It also was underscored when our foreign affairs minister met with the secretary of state to again forge the links that have existed so historically and traditionally between Canada and the United States, to again reassert the great values that we hold in common and that we share as sovereign nations, to say that we will stand by our American brothers and sisters as they would by us and that we will do so in the best interests of Canada and in the best interests of the people of Canada. By extension when we do that, when we stand shoulder to shoulder with our American friends and allies in support, we will provide them with the kinds of requirements necessary to ensure that in fact we underscore our commitment to them.

• (1715)

At the end of all of this, my point is simple. The Canadian government will stand with the Americans in this very important matter.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): It being 5.15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Call in the members.

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

Supply

(Division No. 141)

YEAS

Members

Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bellehumeur	Bergeron
Bigras	Blaikie
Borotsik	Bourgeois
Brien	Brison
Cardin	Casey
Clark	Comartin
Crête	Davies
Desjarlais	Desrochers
Doyle	Dubé
Duceppe	Elley
Fournier	Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier	Godin
Grey (Edmonton North)	Guay
Hearn	Herron
Keddy (South Shore)	Laframboise
Lanctôt	Lebel
Lill	Loubier
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Marceau	Mark
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	McDonough
Ménard	Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)	Nystrom
Perron	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Proctor
Robinson	Roy
Sauvageau	St-Hilaire
Strahl	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)	Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)
Venne	Wasylycia-Leis
Wayne-61	

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Adams	Alcock
Anders	Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Anderson (Victoria)	Assad
Assadourian	Augustine
Bagnell	Bailey
Bakopanos	Barnes
Bélaïr	Bélangier
Bennett	Benoit
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Bonwick
Boudria	Bradshaw
Breitkreuz	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Caccia	Cadman
Calder	Caplan
Carignan	Casson
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Chatters
Collenette	Comuzzi
Cotler	Cullen
Cummins	Cuzner
Day	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Drouin	Duhamel
Duncan	Easter
Epp	Eyking
Farrah	Finlay
Fitzpatrick	Folco
Fry	Gagliano
Gallant	Gallaway
Goldring	Goodale
Gouk	Graham
Grewal	Grose
Guarnieri	Hanger
Harb	Harris
Harvard	Harvey
Hill (MacLeod)	Hilstrom
Hinton	Hubbard
Ianno	Jackson

Supply

Jaffer	Jennings
Johnston	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Laliberte
Lastewka	Lavigne
LeBlanc	Leung
Lincoln	Longfield
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)	MacAulay
Macklin	Mahoney
Maloney	Manley
Marcil	Marleau
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews	Mayfield
McCallum	McCormick
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	McTeague
Merrifield	Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Minna	Mitchell
Moore	Murphy
Myers	Nault
Neville	Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Obhrai	Owen
Pagtakhan	Pallister
Paradis	Parrish
Patry	Peschisolido
Peterson	Pettigrew
Phinney	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pillitteri	Pratt
Price	Proulx
Provenzano	Redman
Regan	Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Reynolds	Richardson
Ritz	Robillard
Saada	Savoy
Scherrer	Schmidt
Scott	Serré
Sgro	Shepherd
Skelton	Sorenson
Speller	Spencer
St-Jacques	St-Julien
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart	Stinson
Szabo	Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Tirabassi	Toews
Tonks	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Vellacott
Volpe	Wappel
Whelan	White (Langley—Abbotsford)
White (North Vancouver)	Wilfert
Williams	Wood
Yelich-195	

PAIRED

Members

Allard	Asselin
Carroll	Copps
Dalphond-Guiral	Duplain
Eggleton	Fontana
Gagnon (Champlain)	Girard-Bujold
Gray (Windsor West)	Guimond
Lalonde	O'Brien (Labrador)
Paquette	Rocheleau-16

• (1745)

The Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

The next question is on the main motion.

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, if you ask, I think you would find consent that the vote just taken on the amendment be applied to the main motion.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Paul Forseth: Mr. Speaker, I wish to be recorded on this vote as voting in favour.

Mr. Gurbax Malhi: Mr. Speaker, I missed the vote before and I want to register against the motion now before the House.

(The House divided on the motion, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 142)

YEAS

Members

Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bellehumeur	Bergeron
Bigras	Blaikie
Borotsik	Bourgeois
Brien	Brisson
Cardin	Casey
Clark	Comartin
Crête	Davies
Desjarlais	Desrochers
Doyle	Dubé
Duceppe	Elley
Forseth	Fournier
Gagnon (Québec)	Gauthier
Godin	Grey (Edmonton North)
Guay	Hearn
Herron	Keddy (South Shore)
Laframboise	Lanctôt
Lebel	Lill
Loubier	Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Marceau
Mark	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McDonough	Ménard
Meredith	Mills (Red Deer)
Nystrom	Perron
Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
Proctor	Robinson
Roy	Sauvageau
St-Hilaire	Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)	Venne
Wasylycia-Leis	Wayne-62

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Adams	Alcock
Anders	Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Anderson (Victoria)	Assad
Assadourian	Augustine
Bagnell	Bailey
Bakopanos	Barnes
Bélair	Bélangier
Bennett	Benoit
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Bonwick
Boudria	Bradshaw
Breitkreuz	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Caccia	Cadman
Calder	Caplan
Carignan	Casson
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Chatters
Collenette	Comuzzi
Cotler	Cullen
Cummins	Cuzner
Day	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Drouin	Duhamel
Duncan	Easter
Epp	Eyking
Farrah	Finlay
Fitzpatrick	Folco
Fry	Gagliano

Supply

[English]

CUSTOMS ACT

The House resumed from September 24 consideration of the motion that Bill S-23, an act to amend the Customs Act and to make related amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment to the motion at second reading of Bill S-23.

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I think if you ask you would find consent that members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as voting on the amendment now before the House, with Liberal members voting no.

• (1750)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Richard Harris: Mr. Speaker, on this amendment Canadian Alliance members will be voting yea.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Brien: Mr. Speaker, members of the Bloc Québécois will vote against this motion.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, members of the NDP will vote against this motion.

Mr. André Bachand: Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that the members of the Coalition will vote yes on this motion.

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 143)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anders	Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Bailey
Benoit	Borotsik
Breitkreuz	Brisson
Cadman	Casey
Casson	Chatters
Clark	Cummins
Day	Doyle
Duncan	Elley
Epp	Fitzpatrick
Forseth	Gallant
Goldring	Gouk
Grewal	Grey (Edmonton North)
Hanger	Harris
Hearn	Herron
Hill (Macleod)	Hilstrom
Hinton	Jaffer
Johnston	Keddy (South Shore)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Lunn (Saenich—Gulf Islands)
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mark	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Mayfield	Meredith
Merrifield	Mills (Red Deer)
Moore	Obhrai
Pallister	Peschisolido
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)	Reynolds
Ritz	Schmidt
Skelton	Sorenson
Spencer	Stinson
Strahl	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)

Gallant
Goldring
Gouk
Grewal
Guamieri
Harb
Harvard
Hill (Macleod)
Hinton
Ianno
Jaffer
Johnston
Karetak-Lindell
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
Lastewka
LeBlanc
Lincoln
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Macklin
Malhi
Manley
Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Mayfield
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Murphy
Nault
Normand
O'Reilly
Owen
Pallister
Parrish
Peschisolido
Pettigrew
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Richardson
Robillard
Savoy
Schmidt
Serré
Shepherd
Sorenson
Spencer
St-Julien
Steckle
Stinson
Thibault (West Nova)
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews
Torsney
Valeri
Vellacott
Wappel
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Wilfert
Wood

Galloway
Goodale
Graham
Grose
Hanger
Harris
Harvey
Hilstrom
Hubbard
Jackson
Jennings
Jordan
Karygiannis
Keyes
Knutson
Laliberte
Lavigne
Leung
Longfield
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
Marcil
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Matthews
McCallum
McGuire
McLellan
Merrifield
Minna
Moore
Myers
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Obhrai
Pagtakhan
Paradis
Patry
Peterson
Phinney
Pillitteri
Price
Provenzano
Regan
Reynolds
Ritz
Saada
Scherrer
Scott
Sgro
Skelton
Speller
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Stewart
Szabo
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tirabassi
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Volpe
Whelan
White (North Vancouver)
Williams
Yelich-196

PAIRED

Members

Allard	Asselin
Carroll	Copps
Dalphond-Guiral	Duplain
Eggleton	Fontana
Gagnon (Champlain)	Girard-Bujold
Gray (Windsor West)	Guimond
Lalonde	O'Brien (Labrador)
Paquette	Rocheleau-16

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Private Members' Business

Thompson (Wild Rose)
Vellacott
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Williams

Toews
Wayne
White (North Vancouver)
Yelich-70

NAYS

Members

Adams
Anderson (Victoria)
Assadourian
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bakopanos
Bélaïr
Bellehumeur
Bergeron
Bevilacqua
Binet
Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick
Bourgeois
Brien
Bryden
Caccia
Caplan
Carignan
Catterall
Chamberlain
Collenette
Comuzzi
Crête
Cuzner
Desjarlais
DeVillers
Dion
Dubé
Duhamel
Eyking
Finlay
Fournier
Gagliano
Galloway
Godin
Graham
Guarnieri
Harb
Harvey
Ianno
Jennings
Karetak-Lindell
Keyes
Knutson
Laframboise
Lancôt
Lavigne
LeBlanc
Lill
Longfield
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
Marceau
Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McDonough
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
Neville
Nystrom
O'Reilly
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Perron
Pettigrew
Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri
Pratt
Proctor
Provenzano

Alcock
Assad
Augustine
Bagnell
Barnes
Bélangier
Bennett
Bertrand
Bigras
Blaikie
Bonin
Boudria
Bradshaw
Brown
Bulte
Calder
Cardin
Castonguay
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Comartin
Cotler
Cullen
Davies
Desrochers
Dhaliwal
Drouin
Duceppe
Easter
Farrah
Folco
Fry
Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier
Goodale
Grose
Guay
Harvard
Hubbard
Jackson
Jordan
Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
Laliberte
Lastewka
Lebel
Leung
Lincoln
Loubier
Macklin
Malhi
Manley
Marcil
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Matthews
McCormick
McGuire
McLellan
Ménard
Minna
Murphy
Nault
Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Paradis
Patry
Peterson
Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Plamondon
Price
Proulx
Redman

Regan
Robillard
Roy
Sauvageau
Scherrer
Serré
Shepherd
St-Hilaire
St-Julien
Steckle
Szabo
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Ur
Vanclief
Volpe
Wasylcyia-Leis
Wilfert

Richardson
Robinson
Saada
Savoy
Scott
Sgro
Speller
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Stewart
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Torsney
Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)
Valeri
Venne
Wappel
Whelan
Wood-188

PAIRED

Members

Allard
Carroll
Dalphond-Guiral
Eggleton
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gray (Windsor West)
Lalonde
Paquette

Asselin
Copps
Duplain
Fontana
Girard-Bujold
Guimond
O'Brien (Labrador)
Rocheleau-16

The Speaker: I declare the amendment negatived.

[*English*]

It being 5.50 p.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance) moved that Bill C-289, an act to amend the Young Offenders Act (public safety), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to speak to my private member's bill, C-289, which attempts to amend the Young Offenders Act and to achieve a number of objectives.

Before I proceed, I would like to point out to the House that I initiated the drafting of the bill before the justice minister introduced Bill C-3, a carbon copy of Bill C-7 that died on the order paper at the dissolution of parliament with the call of the 2000 federal election. Bill C-3 was an act to enact the criminal justice act.

Bill C-289 reflects the sentiments expressed to me by many of the Crowfoot residents during that 2000 federal election campaign, sentiments which have been reverberating throughout the country since the Liberals took power in 1993.

I made a commitment to the people of Crowfoot to restore some sanity to a justice system that has, for far too long, in their opinion, coddled offenders, particularly violent young offenders. Canadians from coast to coast are concerned about their personal safety and the safety of their children.

Private Members' Business

The Liberals made a promise to Canadians. In successive elections, they promised to make our homes and our streets much safer. It is evident from the lenient justice legislation introduced and subsequently enacted by this majority government, including the subsequent lax amendments to the Young Offenders Act under Bill C-37, that the Liberals have not lived up to those promises; indeed, the Liberals have broken those promises.

The Liberal government's soft on crime position will not enhance public safety and personal security. The Liberal's soft justice legislation, such as that enacting conditional sentences, threatens the safety of all Canadians.

The Liberal justice minister, despite having overwhelming support from people throughout the country, does not have the fortitude to enact the necessary tough measures to hold murderers and other violent offenders, including violent young offenders, fully accountable for their heinous crimes against innocent citizens.

In 1996, the justice minister mandated the standing committee on justice and legal affairs to review the Young Offenders Act following the 10th anniversary of its enactment in 1984. After months of cross country hearings, submissions and presentations by people with vested interest in youth justice, and at a cost of almost half a million dollars, the committee tabled a report in April 1997. The report contained a number of recommendations for the Young Offenders Act.

Despite the committee's report and despite the justice minister's promise in June 1997, immediately following that federal election, to make amending the Young Offenders Act a priority, it took her more than two years to do so.

Thinking that old habits die hard, immediately following the election I requested the drafting of Bill C-289 anticipating that once again the justice minister would move slowly and drag her feet on bringing in changes to the most despised piece of legislation in Canada, the Young Offenders Act.

The minister proved me wrong and did introduce Bill C-3 relatively soon after the 2000 federal election. She did, however, true to her form, bring in a bill with little or no teeth.

At this time, I commend my colleague from Surrey North for repeatedly pointing out the inadequacies of Bill C-3.

The fundamental purpose of Canada's youth justice system is the protection of society, which entails dealing effectively with an offender after a crime has been committed. It was not designed to repair social flaws. It was not designed to deal with dysfunctional families. It was not designed to deal with economic hardships. It was not put into place to deal with the deficiencies of our education system. These root causes of youth crime must instead be addressed through effective social programs, sound economic policies, support for Canadian families and early detection and intervention programs.

•(1755)

By failing to recognize this simple fact, successive federal governments have diluted and weakened the effectiveness of Canada's criminal justice system. Young offenders are no longer being held accountable for their actions in a proper and effective

manner. As a result, Canadians have lost faith in their ability to protect their families and their property.

If this all sounds familiar, it is because it is taken from the Reform Party, our predecessor, minority report in response to the justice committee's report on amending the Young Offenders Act. A significant amount of time has passed, actually four years, since that minority report was product. Nothing was different as far as youth crime goes. Therefore, our position has not changed.

The first and perhaps the most important amendment I seek through the private members' bill is to make the protection of society and the safety of others the first purpose of the law respecting young offenders. Appearing before the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs in October 1996, Victor Doerksen, who was a member of the legislature of Alberta, said:

In listening to Albertans, one lesson became very clear. The protection of society should take priority over all other considerations and there must be some accountability on the part of all offenders...Alberta also recommends that the declaration of principles within the act be amended to give the protection of society and offender accountability priority over all other considerations.

Bill C-3 does not, as recommended by this Alberta member of the legislature and many others who appeared before that standing committee, make the protection of society the first and guiding principle of the youth act. According to the declaration of principles, the safety and security of Canadians is secondary to the rehabilitation and reintegration of young offenders back into society.

Beside failing to make the protection of society the guiding principle, the new youth criminal justice act effectively enacts the most contentious parts of the old Juvenile Delinquents Act; that is the portion that wrongfully promotes an inequitable application of criminal law, in that it allows or provides far too much discretion to the youth court.

Bill C-289 also serves to support section 43 of the criminal code in that it attempts to reinforce the principle that reasonable force may be used to discipline young persons by those with authority over them. Those in positions of authority over youth, including parents, teachers and police officers, should not be afraid to use reasonable means of discipline or intervention in minor incidents.

Schools are effectively diverting police officers from far more serious matters by calling them unnecessarily to settle disputes that could be handled by teachers or by other students. However, teachers fear that they themselves may be charged if they inadvertently harm a student while trying to stop a fight or dealing with an uncontrollable student. They are reluctant to do anything but stand by, stand back and watch until the police arrive. That must be changed.

Private Members' Business

Bill C-289 attempts to do a number of other things. It attempts to lower the maximum age of the Young Offenders Act from 17 to 15 years of age. Sixteen and seventeen year olds are legally allowed to drive cars. They are allowed to get married. They are allowed to live on their own. They have the knowledge and the capacity to know right from wrong. They also have the physical strength of most adults. In some cases perhaps more physical strength than what most adults would have. For all intents and purposes, in my opinion 16 and 17 year olds are adults and should be treated as such under the criminal law. That opinion is shared by a number of people who appeared before the committee as well. It is shared by the former Attorney General of Ontario, Charles Harnick, who said before the standing committee:

● (1800)

Our first recommendation is that a young offender be defined as a person aged 15 years or under. Until the passing of the Young Offenders Act in 1984, the maximum age for young offenders in Ontario under the Juvenile Delinquents Act was 15-years old. For the purpose of criminal law, 16 and 17-year-olds were considered adults... A 16-year-old can legally drive, work, get married and have a family. If, as a society, we accept a younger person's ability to make serious choices such as that, then we must accept that 16-year-olds have the moral capacity to understand the consequences of doing wrong and should be held accountable for their actions.

My private member's bill also attempts to lower the minimum age limit of the Young Offenders Act from 12 years to 10.

Numerous witnesses appeared before the standing committee, including a city councillor from Scarborough, Ontario. That councillor spoke in support of lowering the age of criminality. Councillor Brad Duguid said:

—I'd like to see the age lowered in terms of the applicability to 10 years or under. And that's not an attempt to try to throw 10 and 11-year-olds in custody or in jail... It's simply an attempt to try to give the police a little more legal ability to intervene, and I think that's the key, is being able to intervene...

Regarding lowering the age limit, Constable Sue Olsen, who is a native resource officer with the Edmonton police service, testified. I loved the quote she gave at the standing committee. She said:

I work in the inner city school. One of the issues that comes up for us as street police officers is that there is a gap with the under 12-year-old children who get involved in criminal activity. We're in a sit and wait process, waiting until they're 12 before we can get them into services and deal with them before they become more of a problem down the road.

The officer was saying that as it now applies we must sit and wait until they are 12 years old so that they can get the help they need.

Some of these young people in inner cities throughout this nation need intervention at an early age. This is not so that people can be incarcerated. This is not so we can take 10 and 11 year olds, hold them in custody and throw them in jail. This is so they can get the rehabilitative programs they need so that they will be successfully integrated into society.

On April 18, 1996, Superintendent Gwen Boniface, a member of the Canadian Association of Police Chiefs, said in regard to the anonymity of the Young Offenders Act:

—while valuable from the perspective of not labelling first offenders and for all the very valid reasons that we know of, it is often outweighed by the ability of young offenders to deflect responsibility. The flaw with the system is that it countermands the basic principles that all responsible parents attempt to instill in their children—namely, to accept responsibility for one's actions.

In response to the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and in response to Albertans, who support a partial lifting of the ban, my

private member's bill seeks to allow for the publishing of all the names of all violent offenders. I believe that the public has a right to know if a violent offender has been released or may reside in their community. I believe that knowledge far outweighs any privacy considerations for the offender. Parents have the right to protect their children.

I would submit that they cannot do so if they do not know with whom their children are associating; perhaps with a convicted drug dealer or a violent offender.

In recognition that some youth make minor mistakes that they do not repeat, I believe, as does my party, that their privacy should be maintained.

The recidivism rate for young offenders clearly shows that the sentencing provisions of the Young Offenders Act have been ineffective. Particularly in cases of violent offences such as sexual assault, the current maximum sentence of only three years does not provide an adequate period of time for rehabilitation to occur.

● (1805)

It has taken years for the offender to develop this behaviour and it takes years to reverse it. The maximum sentence of seven years proposed in my private member's bill would provide judges with greater sentencing options for the most severe cases.

When I campaigned in the election the people of Crowfoot said that we needed an act that was not simply there to punish but was also there to rehabilitate. Bill C-289 does that.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The hon. member will have five minutes at the end.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Madam Speaker, if the member who seconded the motion does not have enough time I would like to forfeit my five minutes and have them tacked on to his time, if that is possible.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): It does not look like we will have a problem. Is there agreement?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

● (1810)

Mr. Stephen Owen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, after extensive consultation and deliberation the House of Commons passed Bill C-7 on May 29, 2001. Bill C-7 would repeal and replace the Young Offenders Act with the youth criminal justice act. The bill is now before the Senate and would invoke the key principles of fairness, rights and a focused use of the criminal law power in its framework for youth justice.

The reforms are premised on the notion that it is through prevention and meaningful and therefore varied consequences for the full range of youth crime, rehabilitation and reintegration that Canadians are protected over the long term. It recognizes the need to have a separate justice system for youth, special procedural protections, interventions that are proportionate to the seriousness of the offence, and approaches that help to instruct the young person about the consequences of the behaviour.

Private Members' Business

It would provide opportunities to repair harm, support for rehabilitation and reintegration of the youth, and opportunities for the constructive involvement of victims, family members and others. The new direction for youth justice is both a fair and effective response to youth crime and it is supported by Canadians.

The proposed changes to the Young Offenders Act set out in Bill C-289 were considered by the justice and human rights committee in its study of Bill C-7 and not adopted. In sum, the proposed amendments allow for less discretion in the system and essentially a punitive approach to youth crime.

Bill C-7 embodies a fair and proportionate response to youth crime. Sentences are intended to be adequate to hold a youth accountable for the offence he or she has committed. Youth court judges can apply adult sentences for serious offences, if necessary, to hold youth fairly accountable. However the rule is fairness and proportionality to the seriousness of the offence.

Those who mistakenly believe that punishment alone serves to protect society will never find penalties to be tough enough. Their approach would result in unfair harsh penalties that are not effective in stopping youth crime or reforming young offenders.

Studies are clear that harsh penalties do not deter other youth. Moreover, there is a growing body of evidence that non-custodial penalties are as or more effective than custodial ones and avoid the risks of incarceration.

The youth justice system in Canada is already an overly harsh and ineffective system. Young people are sentenced to custody at a rate four times higher than adults. Studies show that Canada's youth incarceration rate is the highest among western countries including the United States. Young persons in Canada often receive harsher custodial sentences than adults receive for the same type of offence. Almost 80% of custodial sentences are for non-violent offences. Many non-violent and first time offenders found guilty of less serious offences such as minor theft are sentenced to custody.

Currently the youth justice system under the Young Offenders Act is not working as well as it should for Canadians. Too many young people are charged and often incarcerated with questionable results. Procedural protections for young people are not adequate and too many youth end up serving custodial sentences with adults.

The overarching principles are unclear and conflicting. There are disparities and unfairness in youth sentencing. Interventions are not appropriately targeted to the seriousness of offences. They are neither adequately meaningful for individual offenders and victims nor adequately supportive of rehabilitation and reintegration.

The proposed youth criminal justice act would address these fundamental flaws by targeting responses of the youth justice system to the seriousness of the offence, clarifying the principles of the youth justice system, ensuring fairness and proportionality in sentencing, respecting and protecting rights, enabling meaningful consequences aimed at rehabilitation, supporting reintegration after custody, and encouraging an inclusive approach to youth crime.

These approaches are now included in Bill C-7 which would repeal the Young Offenders Act and replace it with a legislative

framework that would reflect Canadian values and provide for a fairer and more effective youth justice system.

The proposed amendments in Bill C-289 do not reflect what Canadians want in a youth justice system. The proposed provisions include a return to corporal punishment, removing privacy protections, lowering of ages including the age of criminal responsibility to 10, longer youth sentences, and less discretion in the system.

The direction of the amendments is repressive and does not include efforts at rehabilitation, addressing the needs of youth or involving youth in repairing the harm he or she may have caused.

● (1815)

Canadians have seen that tough, disproportionate punitive approaches are not only unfair but ineffective. Bill C-7, already passed by the House of Commons, reflects the values and directions that Canadians want in a renewed youth justice system. They are not the strictly punitive approaches reflected in Bill C-289. Canadians want and deserve the youth justice system envisioned in Bill C-7 that is the product of consultation, advice and thought.

The proposals that are the subject of today's debate were considered in the development of Bill C-7. They were not adopted then nor should they be adopted now.

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, any time I have an opportunity to discuss the Canadian youth justice system, I do not hesitate to bring my experience to the debate. I would like to commend the member for Crowfoot for his continuing diligence in pointing out to the government Canadians' overwhelming concern about the Canadian youth criminal justice system.

It is unfortunate that this private member's bill is not votable because it would once again point out the government's absolute lack of interest in listening to the concerns of the majority of Canadians with respect to the important issue of youth crime. My colleague's bill encompasses years of study and listening on the part of his predecessor from Crowfoot, Mr. Jack Ramsay; listening not only to the Canadian public but to the judiciary that must interpret the laws of the land and to those agencies most affected by the laws, such as provincial detention centres, police forces, and various educational systems to name just a few.

Private Members' Business

The bill, unlike the youth criminal justice act which the Liberal government passed earlier this year, would make the protection of society its primary focus. The Liberals on the other hand continue to put the interests of the offender ahead of the protection of society. In various ways the youth criminal justice act places the safety and security of Canadians behind the interest in rehabilitating and reintegrating the offender back into society. For example in the declaration of principle of the YCJA it lists the following order of importance: one, address the circumstances underlying the young person's offending behaviour; two, rehabilitate and reintegrate; and three, ensure the young person is subject to meaningful consequences.

The government tries to assure Canadians that the order does not matter. The order is important because it is what guides judges in their determination of how much weight to assign to specific factors. Bill C-289 would make the protection of society the primary and guiding principle of Canada's youth criminal justice laws. That is not to say that rehabilitation and reintegration into the community are not important. Obviously they are, however the security and safety of the community must be considered above all else.

There are numerous examples of how this principle could provide better protection to Canadians. One example that immediately comes to mind is the murder of a six year old British Columbia girl, Dawn Shaw. On October 24, 1992, Dawn was playing with her 16 year old next door neighbour Jason Gamache in Courtenay on Vancouver Island. Unknown to Dawn's parents or anyone else in the housing complex located right next to an elementary school was the fact that Jason was on probation for sexually molesting a young child one year previously. He dragged Dawn off into the bushes, sexually assaulted her and stomped her to death when she tried to cry out for help. He then joined in the search for her and after her battered body was found, he babysat her two siblings while her parents went to the RCMP detachment.

Even the police were unaware of his presence in the community. It is my understanding that it was only after they ran his name during the course of the investigation that he popped up on their information system. Had our youth criminal justice laws given priority to the protection of society, Dawn Shaw would be a flowering young woman today.

Any legislation that is guided by societal protection would allow the community to know when a violent offender has been released into its midst. How can parents protect their children if the law does not permit them to know the dangers that are present? Unfortunately the new youth criminal justice act follows closely in the footsteps of the Young Offenders Act by imposing numerous restrictions on the naming of violent offenders.

There are a limited number of instances in which the young person may be named to protect the community, but once again the list is restrictive and does not include all violent or dangerous offenders. The courts retain the discretion to override the identification of the offender. In the opinion of many, the courts have been excessively protective of the rights and interests of young offenders while public and community safety have become secondary. Bill C-289 would allow for the unrestricted public identification of violent young offenders. It cannot be said often enough that the public has the right to know information that will allow it to protect itself.

There are so many flaws in the current Young Offenders Act and the pending youth criminal justice act that in having only limited time to talk about the changes the member for Crowfoot is suggesting in his private member's bill, I can only touch the tip of the iceberg. Bill C-289 would lower the age of application to 10 years. Contrary to the Liberal government's spin machine, this is not only a proposition of the Canadian Alliance and its predecessor the Reform Party. The same recommendation was made in a report from the justice committee in the 35th parliament, the very report which forms the basis of the youth criminal justice act. This was a Liberal dominated committee but true to form, the government ignored it.

The intent is not to throw 10 and 11 year olds into jail. It is to make sure that those taking the first steps down the road to criminal behaviour receive the treatment and assistance they require. Far too often we see these young people falling through the cracks of the current system. Unfortunately, that will continue to be the case.

● (1820)

The use of alternative measures is also advocated in Bill C-289. I have mentioned many times before in this place that I fully support this approach as witnessed by my own involvement for the past seven years in the community based diversion program at home in British Columbia. It should be pointed out that although the Liberals would have Canadians believe that what they refer to as extrajudicial measures is their brainchild, Bill C-289 has been around substantially longer than the youth criminal justice act in all of its incarnations.

There is one major difference however. Alternative measures as proposed in Bill C-289 would be restricted to those charged with non-violent offences. In addition, the views of the victims would require consideration if alternative measures were being proposed.

The youth criminal justice act will make extrajudicial measures available to repeat and violent offenders. In my opinion that defeats the whole purpose. Violent behaviour demands a more formal, serious response from society. Alternative measures should be presented as a one time only opportunity for a young person who truly desires to reform.

As I indicated earlier, it is unfortunate that private member's Bill C-289 is not votable. If the current Young Offenders Act were amended according to the proposals contained in the bill, there would be no need for an entirely new piece of legislation as was passed in the form of the youth criminal justice act.

The youth criminal justice act, due to its mind-numbing complexity and failure to comply with the wishes of Canadians will in all likelihood become as much despised as the Young Offenders Act it is intended to replace.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Madam Speaker, I very much attach myself to the remarks of the previous speaker and many who have real, legitimate concerns with respect to the implementation of Bill C-7, the new youth criminal justice act, which like its predecessors, contains a very complex and cumbersome approach to youth justice in this country, one which will not achieve desired ends, that is, an attempt to bring about greater accountability and responsibility in our youth criminal justice system.

I do disagree with one comment of the previous speaker, which is that accepting this bill in its entirety would do more than bringing about a new youth criminal justice system. Certainly I think it touches on some very important subject areas which have been debated numerous times in the House. The hon. member's predecessor from Crowfoot also brought about numerous suggestions to improve the criminal justice system.

Although we are generally supportive of this private member's bill, it deals with subject matter that will be addressed by the new youth criminal justice system, particularly with respect to sentencing provisions, implementation of rehabilitative programs and early intervention. The elements that deal with the lowering of the age of accountability is something that other members, including myself, have spoken on, have presented private member's business on going back a number of years. This legislation would not, as the previous speaker indicated, be a licence to somehow hammer 10 year olds.

As members are well aware, it would simply bring about a process where the justice system could intervene at the earliest possible opportunity, particularly when it involves crimes of violence, and particularly when it involves a young person who has exhibited a longstanding record of anti-social behaviour.

At the current rate, the police, counsellors and those who want to intervene, including the young person's parents, may have to wait two years until they reach the age of 12 before the system can kick in. The response that is so often given is that there are social services provisions that can react. They do not have the sanctions available under the criminal justice system. More important, they do not have the resources. That is perhaps one of the greatest flaws of this new legislation that my friend of course did not have time to touch upon.

For all of the good that might come from implementation of Bill C-7, the new youth criminal justice act, the provinces are still left to carry the majority of the resources and the funding that would implement these rehabilitative type programs and restorative justice models. There is increasing frustration among justice officials, prosecutors, counsellors, probation officers and those who are working in the system regarding the downloading of a very cumbersome, complex bill without the resources and actual tools to implement or enact the programs which do not exist.

There are some very good programs currently operating without the involvement of the federal government, without the budget. I had an opportunity to visit Pitt Meadows and Maple Ridge, British Columbia where there is a unique, highly effective early intervention style program up and running which is based on restorative justice models. On numerous occasions when they have applied for federal funding for resources, in keeping with the spirit, pith and substance of what Bill C-7 represents, they have been told that there is no

money available for such a thing. This is in advance of the government bringing in these changes. One has to question whether it is in good faith that we are going to see this legislation actually implemented.

It is unfortunate that the bill is not a votable item. In most instances I think the House would like to express its will on such an important piece of legislation.

The bill does reinforce the principle that reasonable force may be used in a disciplinary manner. This is one of a number of omnibus type bills that we see before us. We are generally supportive of these initiatives but I do not think that restating a principle that is already in existence accomplishes a great deal. Judicial discretion is sometimes absent when we make hard and fast rules about what sentences will apply and when judges will be permitted to apply them.

● (1825)

The existing Young Offenders Act and the proposed amendments currently before the Senate allow for a broader range of sentences on certain issues, particularly pertaining to youths aged 14 and up where a transfer may occur in a courtroom.

That is a good thing. Discretion should be broadened in certain instances, particularly for offences involving violence where judges must weigh a range of circumstances. Some offences, such as assault with a weapon, are deemed violent even when they do not result in substantial injuries.

Those types of decisions should be left to the courts. Judges should be permitted to hear from both defence and crown counsel regarding the extent of the harm that may have been caused before they make a decision to sentence a young person.

I disagree with the suggestion that we lower the application of the Young Offenders Act to age 16. There is ample evidence before the country and in the criminal justice system that youths at age 17 can still avail themselves of a diminished degree of responsibility in the court system.

With new provisions in place that allow for the elevation and transfer of young people into the adult court system it becomes redundant to lower the age of application of the youth justice system.

The private member's bill puts a number of recommendations before the House that deal with lengthening periods of probation. That is a good suggestion. In the past young people have finished their incarceration and left the closed custody of detention centres only to have no follow up or probation period on which conditions are attached. They are not ordered to avoid certain associations, refrain from the use and possession of alcohol, or stay away from individuals who may have been involved in their offence such as the victim or the victim's family.

Probationary conditions are an important part of rehabilitation and the protection of the public, which are of course the fundamental principles that must apply in any justice system. Lengthening periods of probation or making them mandatory is a good thing.

Private Members' Business

Bill C-7 would apply a new system of probation that would allow for parole and reduced sentences. That is very much a step backward. Despite its flaws the current system is consistent in the application of sentences. Young people incarcerated for a period of time know they will be there for that set time. They realize that is the sentence that has been meted out and they can avail themselves of programs. Under the new system they would be eligible for parole and early release.

This is not the route we should be pursuing. It is not the direction in which the youth justice system should be headed. It would add to the already intense cynicism that exists throughout the country regarding the light sentences often handed down by our youth court system.

The Progressive Conservative Party is generally supportive of the bill. In the past we have consistently emphasized protection of the public and meaningful sentences that bring about accountability and responsibility.

I am glad the new member of parliament for Crowfoot is a convert to the fray and is prepared to bring issues and bills such as this one before the House of Commons. The legislation if enacted would mirror the provisions of the Youth Criminal Justice Act, although not in its entirety. Streamlining legislation is something we should all take seriously.

When the impact is grave and has huge implications for a young person's life the public should have a profound understanding of what the justice system is attempting to do. The new youth criminal justice system as currently proposed by the Department of Justice would accomplish the exact opposite.

● (1830)

Youth and parents would be confused by the new system. We should refer to legislation such as this which is simple and straightforward and accomplishes all the principles associated with justice.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, there is an old saying: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it". The implication is that if it is broken it needs to be fixed.

I grew up on a farm and have an old pickup. That pickup truck is so old and there are so many things wrong with it that if I tried to fix it I would not know where to begin. It does not run well. It blows oil out the back. The mirrors are broken and the windshield is shot. If I wanted to build the thing into a new truck I would not start by replacing the mirrors. I would not know where to begin.

We have seen over the past period of time that the Young Offenders Act is broken and needs repair. The government has said it is broken. There were things in the Juvenile Delinquents Act that were unacceptable. There were contentious parts of the act that the government and all sides of the House said needed to be repaired.

Bills and proposals have been brought forward such as Bill C-3 and Bill C-7 which the government has tried to tinker with. As we heard from the Liberal member across the way a new bill has been brought forward, but we are looking at it and asking if it will solve the young offender problem we have in the nation.

One of the things we will grow accustomed to in the House through the years is people standing in the Chamber and saying we need to fix the Young Offenders Act. I believe if we were to ask members opposite they would say yes, there are areas of the act that are not what we would like them to be and they should be fixed, changed and repaired. However the act we have in place does not do that.

The Canadian public would say we need to fix the act. They would say we see many repeat offenders and many teachers who go to school not knowing their students are young offenders. Some are violent offenders yet their teachers are not aware a threat exists.

The recidivism rate for young offenders clearly shows that the Young Offenders Act is broken and its provisions are ineffective. They are ineffective in many areas, particularly with respect to violent offences such as sexual assault. The current maximum sentence of only three years does not provide adequate time for rehabilitation to occur. These are, without a shadow of a doubt, young people whom we want to see rehabilitated. We want to see them reintegrated into society as young men or women who can contribute.

It takes years in some cases for an offender to develop a behaviour and it sometimes takes years to reverse it. The maximum sentence of seven years proposed by my private member's bill would provide judges with greater sentencing options for the most severe cases. Currently judges' hands are tied when they feel that a longer disposition is necessary for the benefit of the offender and the protection of society.

The late mayor of Cornwall, Ron Martelle, said:

Sentencing is the key ingredient in stopping victimization. Sentences must reflect public repudiation of criminal acts by swift, substantial punishment.

I do not recommend longer sentences if we do not first ensure that all prison facilities have mandatory rehabilitative programs.

Those who oppose longer sentences point to the high recidivism rate of young offenders who have been incarcerated. They wrongly conclude that increasing sentences would be ineffective. Others say prison facilities do not provide effective rehabilitation and that this contributes to higher rates of reoffending.

● (1835)

They say this is partly due to limited money and resources. Time does not afford me to go on with the list. However, I implore all members of the House and the general public to read my private member's bill and understand that it is a bill of principles. It outlines requests made to me by the people of Crowfoot and the former member for Crowfoot who, as has been noted here, worked diligently in justice issues, especially with respect to young offenders.

The bill would help restore integrity and sanity to our justice system by making the protection of society its guiding principle.

There are many opportunities through social programs to get to the root causes of youth crime. We need to do that. We need to implore our provincial governments to make sure social programs dealing with education, poverty and a vast number of issues are met.

Private Members' Business

As legislators in the House, it behooves us to bring down laws that first, would protect our society and communities and then would allow young offenders to be reintegrated into society so they may be contributors.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired. As the motion has not been designated a votable item, the order is dropped from the order paper.

[*Translation*]

It being 6.40 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2.00 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.40 p.m.)

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