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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1000)

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 15 petitions.

* * *

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, regarding Taiwan's request to be granted observer status at the World Health Organization.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, entitled "The Federal Role in Aquaculture in Canada".

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 109 the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to the report. However, notwithstanding the deadline of 150 days stipulated in Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the comprehensive response to this report be tabled within 90 days of the presentation of the report to the House.

Succinctly, this is not a unanimous report. There are four dissenting opinions. The opinion of the majority can be encapsulated in one sentence, namely, "The committee supports responsible development of aquaculture provided that the industry is managed sustainably, provided that wild fish and their habitat are protected, and provided that the precautionary principle is genuinely applied".

•(1005)

SCRUTINY OF REGULATIONS

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations.

This committee deals with the means by which Parliament can better oversee the government regulatory process and in particular, to inquire into and report upon the role, functions and powers of the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations.

* * *

PETITIONS

JUSTICE

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have the pleasure to deliver to the House another petition from residents from across Saskatchewan who are concerned about Bill C-250. They are praying in earnest that the bill be not passed by the House of Commons.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Janko Péric (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 it is my privilege to present to the House a petition signed by 50 concerned citizens from my riding of Cambridge. In Canada one out of four children dies before birth from induced abortion. More than half of all Canadians agree that human life needs protection prior to birth and yet there is still no law protecting unborn children.

The petitioners pray and request that Parliament enact legislation that would provide legal recognition and protection of children from fertilization to birth.

RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Mr. Larry Spencer (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege to present two petitions mostly from residents of Ontario and Quebec. They are calling on Parliament to modify legislation to ensure that parents are equally and actively involved in their children's lives after divorce, and to ensure that child support payments are used for the children.

Government Orders

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36. This petition is signed by 47 people from the wonderful community of Milk River in my riding. They call on Parliament to focus its legislative support on adult stem cell research to find the cures and therapies necessary to treat the illnesses and diseases of suffering Canadians.

* * *

● (1010)

[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SITUATION IN IRAQ

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.) moved:

That this House re-affirm:

- the substantial sense of the House, voted on March 20, 2003, in support of the government's decision not to participate in the military intervention in Iraq;
- the unbreakable bonds of values, family, friendship and mutual respect that will always characterize Canada's relationship with the United States of America and the United Kingdom;
- our pride in the work of the members of the Canadian Forces who are deployed in the Persian Gulf region;
- our hope that the U.S.-led coalition accomplishes its mission as quickly as possible with the fewest casualties;
- the importance of self-restraint on the part of all Members of the House in their comments on the war in Iraq while our American friends are in battle; and
- the commitment of Canada to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand today to support the motion before the House, a principled motion where we reaffirm our decision not to participate in the war in Iraq but to continue our participation in the war against terrorism in Afghanistan, a motion where we reaffirm our friendship with the United States and the United Kingdom and our support for the success of the coalition, where we urge restraint in what we say to each other and about our friends in these emotionally charged times. Our motion also focuses on the need to turn our attention to the reconstruction of Iraq as soon as possible.

We will be voting later today on a Canadian Alliance motion which asks the House to apologize for statements made by certain members of Parliament. Presumably, the Leader of the Opposition wants the House of Commons to condemn the leader of the Conservative Party for what he said in Winnipeg on March 26 about the American administration. Surely the motion will have the House of Commons condemn statements related to the war made by members of the Bloc Québécois and the New Democratic Party.

Yes, there are members on this side of the House who have said things in recent weeks in reference to the war with which I strongly disagree and which we all wish had not been said. However there are also members on the other side of the House who say things every day with which all of us on this side disagree and which we sometimes find, in the words of the opposition motion, to be offensive and inappropriate.

We do not use our majority to introduce motions calling upon the House to express regret and apologies for what members opposite may say. We do not do so for a very simple reason. It is for the electorate and not for the House of Commons to pass such judgments.

Nothing is more fundamental in our democracy than the rights and privileges of members of Parliament to speak their minds with complete freedom. These rights and privileges have evolved over centuries in the British parliamentary system. These rights and privileges are a precious asset in a democracy and are not to be tampered with ever.

I have been in the House for a long time. Indeed, I was elected 40 years ago today. Over these many years I have witnessed and participated in very intense debates over very controversial issues, where passions have run very high, where government and opposition have defended fundamentally different positions. However, in all these years, I cannot recall any motion that would have cast a greater chill over the rights of members of Parliament to free speech than the Canadian Alliance motion we will be voting on later today.

● (1015)

The same members who called me at one time Milosevic, who called me a dictator, although the gentler ones called me a friendly dictator, now complain that I do not vet the speeches and remarks of every member of my party. Even worse, they want the House of Commons to condemn members from both sides for expressing their views. As long as it has the confidence of the House, the government speaks on behalf of the nation.

The Deputy Prime Minister spoke eloquently in the House last week on behalf of the government and on behalf of the people of Canada. However this party, this government and this Prime Minister will never vote for a motion that casts a chill on the rights and privileges of members of Parliament to free speech in the House. That is why we have proposed a positive resolution that reflects the profoundly held views of Canadians about the war in Iraq, to which I would like to speak.

Canada took a principled stand against participating in military intervention in Iraq. From the beginning our position has been very clear: to work through the United Nations to achieve the goals we share with our friends and allies; disarming Saddam Hussein; strengthening the international rule of law and human rights; and working toward enduring peace in the region.

Government Orders

We worked very hard to achieve a consensus in the Security Council. We hoped, with a little more time and with robust inspections, that war could have been averted and Iraq could have been disarmed. We argued that a multilateral approach through the United Nations was key to enhancing the international legitimacy of military action and would have made it easier after the war was over.

We applied those principles in deciding not to join the coalition when the war began. We sought a new resolution in the Security Council.

The decision on whether or not to send troops into battle must always be a decision of principle, not a decision of economics, not even a decision of friendship, alone.

Our friendship with the United States is far stronger than some of our critics would have us believe. Our friendship is far stronger than those who scaremonger would have us believe. It is far stronger than some who purport to speak for the business community would have us believe. Close friends can disagree at times and still remain close friends.

When I was a young member of Parliament I remember when Mr. Pearson spoke out in the United States against the war in Vietnam. The United States administration was disappointed and I suspect even the American ambassador at the time was disappointed but our friendship did not suffer. Neither country has ever been in the business of economic retaliation over disagreements on issues of foreign policy. This is not what our relationship is all about. The closeness of our relationship goes well beyond economics alone.

• (1020)

Many of us remember with pride some 23 years ago when Ken Taylor, the Canadian Ambassador in Iran, rescued Americans from the U.S. embassy in Tehran. That is what friendship is all about, a friendship that is far in relations between our two national governments, our states and provinces, our cities, our institutions of learning, our businesses, our hospitals and above all, in our people who work together, marry one another, go to one another's schools and universities, play in the same sports leagues and even sometimes live in one country and work in the other.

The decision we made three weeks ago was not an easy one at all. We would have preferred to have been able to agree with our friends but we, as an independent country, make our own decisions based on our own principles, such as our longstanding belief in the value of a multilateral approach to global problems. This is an approach which we believe is more than ever necessary as we face the threat of global terrorism, environmental damage on a vast scale and many other extremely difficult challenges.

The true test of our principles and our values is precisely whether they guide us when our choices are hard and very difficult. I am proud that this House has spoken so clearly for our principles. I am proud of this country, and I am grateful for the support of Canadians.

Now the war is on and our friends are embattled. While we are not participating in the coalition, for reasons I have expressed, let us be very clear that this government and all Canadians hope for a quick victory for the U.S.-led coalition with a minimum of casualties. We share the concerns of our American, British and Australian friends for their sons and daughters who are bravely fighting. We share

concerns for the safety of Iraqi civilians. We care about the outcome even if we are not participants in the war. This means that we should not say things that could give comfort to Saddam Hussein and this means that we should not do things that would create real difficulties for the coalition.

• (1025)

[*Translation*]

While some express their disappointment because we are not participating in the coalition, perhaps they forget that the U.S.A. is currently waging two wars and we are fully engaged in supporting them in the war on terrorism.

When the U.S.A. was attacked on September 11, 2001, we stood shoulder to shoulder with them in our shock and grief. The people of Newfoundland and other Canadians took into their homes tens of thousands of Americans whose flights could not go home.

We quickly ratified and implemented all international conventions on terrorism and worked closely with the U.S. on terrorist financing and border issues. We passed new anti-terrorism legislation. We played a crucial and highly appreciated role alongside U.S. troops in Kandahar.

We currently have 1,280 military personnel, three warships and aircraft in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea as part of the multilateral mission against terrorism, and we will be returning to Afghanistan this summer with troops.

It is now time for Canada to focus on humanitarian aid and on the post-war reconstruction of Iraq. We have already pledged \$100 million to help provide access to clean water, proper sanitation, food, shelter and primary health care. Twenty-five million of this has already been disbursed.

We are also working closely with the U.S., Great Britain and other countries, UN organizations and other multilateral institutions, to plan now how to help the Iraqi people after the current conflict is over.

We agree with Prime Minister Blair that the United Nations must be closely involved in the process of reconstructing Iraq. But I think it would be impossible for the UN to do it all alone. And we are ready to help as soon as possible.

Before concluding, I want to say that while we all focus on the current situation with respect to Iraq, we cannot ignore other pressing issues. Like the threat from North Korea and the continuing instability in the Middle East. Like the need to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

There again Canada believes in a multilateral approach, in the interests of international peace and security.

Government Orders

We must also recognize that long-term peace and security require not only better intelligence, or armed responses. For hundreds of millions of people, the main threats to their well-being are those of famine, disease, feeble economies, lack of educational opportunity, corrupt or inept governance, and regional conflicts

[*English*]

President Bush recognized these needs. In Monterrey a year ago, in Kananaskis and in his state of the union address to Congress in January, he demonstrated leadership in his commitment to increase international assistance in general and, in particular, to combat the plague of AIDS in Africa. I want to take this opportunity once again, on behalf of all Canadians, to congratulate him for that.

Despite all the pressures on him at home post-September 11, the President has recognized that the issues of poverty, trade and development are in the long run as important to a secure, stable world as addressing the immediate threats we face from terrorism.

I am confident that as we confront the challenges which are before us, we will triumph over them by being strong at home, strong in partnership and partners in a strong international system, loyal to our friends, loyal to our principles and confident in who we are.

I can recall one of the great moments of this Parliament when on the Friday after September 11, 2001 we did something that no other country did. When everyone was scared, we decided to have a show of support for our friends and neighbours. We held this on the Hill in the open. More than 100,000 Canadians came to show their strong feelings about the situation that prevailed in the United States in those days. I was proud of Canada for what we did at that moment, and we did it in a way that showed the values in which we believe.

As I have said before, sometimes we disagree. However there is a reality, and that reality is the fact that we are all aiming for the same goal; to have a more peaceful world where the values that we defend in Canada will be shared across the world.

Today marks 40 years that I have been a member of the House. What I know about Canada is that we are an example to the world of understanding, generosity, sharing and of being able to live with our differences, no matter what language we speak, what religion we profess or the colour of our skin. We have shown to the world that we can all be brothers and sisters. We have built this relationship over many years.

That is why we might sometimes disagree with our neighbours. But our goals are the same. We want to ensure that there is more peace, prosperity and less poverty in the world. We want to ensure that more people in the world have more dignity, prosperity and self-respect. It is the Canadian way.

• (1035)

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in all of that the Prime Minister did refer to some events that actually happened. There were the great outpourings of support for our American friends after September 11, just as during this conflict there has been a great outpouring of support for our American friends and allies, but those outpourings did not originate with our government; they originated with the Canadian people. Canadians have demonstrated once again, and will demonstrate many more times in the future, the capacity that no

other people on the earth has: the capacity to overcome the deficiencies of their government.

We have been witness today to a remarkable event. We are three weeks into a war of epoch defining significance. We are six months into the controversy that led to this war, the growing international controversy. This is the fourth motion of the House to debate this particular war and this particular issue, after several take note debates in all of the months leading up to this. Yet this is the first time the leader of our country, the Prime Minister, has come to actually speak to one of these.

What was the problem over all these weeks and months? Were we busy preparing those 40th anniversary parties? Why now? Is it because the position that was supposed to be safe is now controversial, the position that was supposed to be easy has run into all kinds of communications difficulties, and the position that was supposed to be high in the polls is now the position of a shrinking minority of Canadians?

Today is D-Day, but “D” is not as we used it on the beaches of Normandy; the “D” is for damage control. That is why the Prime Minister is here today.

I do have to comment on some things the Prime Minister has covered in his speech. He addressed in a cursory manner all of the anti-American remarks and slurs made by members of government and the governing party. The Prime Minister dismisses all this by saying that after 40 years in the House he has discovered the merits of the freedom of speech of members of Parliament. I will tell the Prime Minister that I ran into John Nunziata a few days ago. I will pass those words along to him.

I can predict this: if the words said about President Bush were being said about the Prime Minister—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order. I would remind hon. members that on debate we have one person speaking and not everybody trying to help. It is difficult for the Chair to hear the Leader of the Opposition, who has the floor, and I know all hon. members will want to hear the remarks as we hear all hon. members.

Mr. Stephen Harper: If I could just reiterate, Mr. Speaker, if the words that have been said in the past few weeks about President Bush had been said by members of the government about this Prime Minister, I would suggest that this enthusiasm for freedom of speech would have rapidly diminished in the PMO. Of course the real question is why the Prime Minister himself has not distanced himself from the remarks made by members of his government and even his own cabinet.

So what now? What do we do today? Having come to the House of Commons, we say why now and what now? Is it still not to really address this issue as an issue, not as a moment which will define this era and have an immense impact on global security in the years to come? Instead, we have today just another communication strategy, another cynical motion, another image repositioning.

Government Orders

Notice how all the buzzwords have changed in the speech. Three weeks ago it was “independence” and “not being told what to do by the Americans”. It was the “United Nations”. It was “non-justification”. It was all the things about the deficiencies of President Bush. Today it is “shoulder to shoulder”. It is all about the United States and the United Kingdom, “our friends”, about “support for the aims of the war to fight terrorism”, and of course, to congratulate the president for all his hard work. President Bush is learning, and I am sure he knew already, that it sure helps to be a winner.

This motion is an embarrassment. It is not based on principle. What this motion says to the House and says to the Canadian people is, “These are Liberal principles, and if you did not like those three weeks ago, well, we have some new ones today”.

Let me go through it very carefully, just to document the change in position of the government over the past few weeks. This is important. I have stated many times the various controversies and the various contradictions the government has been engaged in. One example: stating that resolution 1441 was enough to justify action in Iraq; certainly saying nothing to the contrary; then condemning our friends and allies for taking action under that resolution; and now supporting the action, in a sense, once it is clear they are winning.

Let me give specific examples. On January 23, the Prime Minister said, “If the Americans or the Brits have great evidence that Saddam Hussein—he is no friend of mine—is not following the instruction of the United Nations...of course Canada will support an activity in there”.

On the same day, January 23, the Prime Minister said, “...it is in the interest of the world that Saddam Hussein comply completely with resolution 1441. ...In doing so, he will avoid a war”.

Again, on January 27, the Prime Minister said, “A resolution was passed unanimously and must be complied with. The resolution sets out what must be done if he does not respect the conditions”.

The next day, on January 28, the Prime Minister said, “...everybody is seeking the enforcement of the resolution”.

On the same day, January 28, the Prime Minister said, “...if Saddam Hussein fails to comply with resolution 1441, not only the U.S., but its allies too will be there to ensure that weapons of mass destruction are removed from Iraq”.

Three days after that, on January 31, from the Prime Minister: “...Resolution 1441 will authorize action”.

Then, what is probably the most important event in all of this, on February 11 there was a motion by my friends from the Bloc Québécois, demanding that the government have a second resolution before acting. The Prime Minister and his government came to the House and voted against that resolution.

On February 24, the Prime Minister said, “I think that some weeks should be given to Saddam to comply very precisely with resolution 1441”.

On the same day, the Prime Minister said, “...with resolution 1441, we are telling Saddam Hussein that if he does not comply with this resolution, there will be very serious consequences”.

Then, on March 17, the president is about to deliver his ultimatum to Iraq and suddenly the Prime Minister rises to his feet with a pre-prepared statement in question period and says to our allies, “We have always made it clear that Canada would require the approval of the Security Council if we were to participate in a military campaign. ...If military action proceeds without a new resolution of the Security Council, Canada will not participate”.

• (1040)

There it is, and today we have a motion in front of us that says we will not participate except to the extent we are actually participating and we want the coalition to win.

This is a serious business. The lives of our friends and allies and the future of the planet are at stake. This is not a game. Let me give another example of this flip-flop; for regime change in Iraq; then against regime change; then apparently not against regime change.

These words are all recent. On February 28, the Prime Minister said, “I’m surprised to hear now we want to get rid of Saddam Hussein... If it is a changing of regime, it’s not what is 1441”.

On March 18, he said, “...the position of changing of regimes in different countries is not a policy that is desirable any time”.

On March 25, the Prime Minister said, “The question of changing regime is not a policy that is acceptable under the United Nations charter...”.

The next day the Prime Minister said, “...changing the regime is not the right policy...”.

However, on March 27, the next day: “The war has already begun and it is now clear that we want the war to be over quickly and that we want the Americans and their allies to be successful”.

On April 6, the Deputy Prime Minister said, “There should be no mistaking the sympathy that we have for the ultimate success of the coalition...”.

All this is leading to today’s motion hoping that the coalition will be successful in achieving its mission, its stated mission, of course, being regime change in the Republic of Iraq.

There is another contradiction: calling the campaign of our allies unjust but now urging a quick and successful end to their activities.

On March 17, the Prime Minister said, “...war is not warranted at this time...”.

On March 18, he said, “As far as their position is concerned, I can state clearly that it is not justified”.

By March 25, they were starting to watch the allied success on TV and starting to reconsider, saying, “I don’t want Saddam Hussein to win”.

On March 20, he said, “...I hope the Americans will do as well as possible”.

Government Orders

On March 24, I thought the most revealing comment from the Minister of Foreign Affairs was, “We are willing to fight”—so now it turns out they are actually willing to be there—“under terms which are supported by the Canadian population and which we believe are appropriate in the circumstances”. That is of course the old veiled Liberal reference to the pollsters.

There is another contradiction and this is the one that troubles us the most on this side: failing to acknowledge Canadian Forces present in the gulf and in the war theatre and then failing to clearly support those troops when the truth was learned.

On February 24, I rose in the House and asked the Prime Minister, “Will the government admit that it has already agreed to contribute to military action in Iraq through back channels?” The Prime Minister said, “Mr. Speaker, the answer is no”. But it turned out that on March 17, after the press reports surfaced, the Prime Minister rose to say, “...we have a certain number of people who are in exchange with the British and the American troops...”.

The House leader says that this goes on all the time. As the House leader for the NDP pointed out, there are provisions in exchange agreements that we have done in the past to withdraw troops from combat that we do not agree with. The government believes that is what it should have done but it did not have the honesty to do it.

It was not just whether the troops were there. It was that they were there, but they were not in combat. They were only going to have water pistols or some such thing but if they were fired on it was a different thing. Then of course it turned out that the British said they were in combat situations and then it was, yes, that is different, our sailors are there but only against the war on terrorism, not in the war against Iraq, until the defence minister admitted that they may actually board Iraqi boats if they suspect they are engaged in some kind of terrorist activity.

● (1045)

There are other contradictions. I do not have time and the world does not have time to listen to all the contradictions of the government but let me mention a couple. The government condemns those who express support for our American neighbours, including those in this party, but fails to rebuke the anti-American bigotry in its own ranks. I will go farther. Regarding some of the comments made by personnel in the Prime Minister's Office and in the cabinet, there are too many of those to be accidental. At one point the government thought that playing the anti-American card was a strategy. It misunderstood how Canadians feel about their American neighbours. Another contradiction is it condemns Saddam Hussein for war crimes and genocide, yet fails to remove Saddam's diplomatic front men from Canada.

As I say, the greatest of all of these things is to have Canadian troops in uniform in the war theatre without the full support of their government. I say to the Prime Minister, notwithstanding my regard for his long period of service, this has not only embarrassed us; this is something that no prime minister has done before and I hope no prime minister will ever do again.

The lack of leadership on this issue has not been restricted to the Prime Minister. I point out that not a single Liberal member of Parliament, notwithstanding some who have said they do not agree

with everything the government is doing here, has at any point stood in the House to vote against the government's position on any aspect of this issue. So much for all the confidence that these men have about the free speech that would be tolerated from the Prime Minister's Office.

The Deputy Prime Minister has not just been part of this changing of position, but unlike the gradual move of the Prime Minister from one muddy position to another muddy position, he has actually flip-flopped back and forth completely. On March 20 he said:

We made a choice based on principle in this case, and the principles were right and the choices were right. You need to take into account the precedent that... establishes, when it comes to countries that may believe they are threatened in some way by a neighbouring tyrant.

He was against regime change, but the next day he said, “The government in Baghdad is a nasty piece of business. We certainly support the efforts of the U.S. and the U.K. and the other countries that are there”.

That was on March 21. Then on April 3 he was back to saying:

Canada is not directly engaged in this conflict. We stood apart because we believe that it is the Security Council of the United Nations that ought to take the responsibility for authorizing the use of force in international conflict.

Three days later on April 6 he was back again on the U.S. side:

There should be no mistaking the sympathy that we have for the ultimate success of the coalition forces.

Fortunately the Deputy Prime Minister is a well-conditioned runner or he would have casts all over his ankles by now from jumping on an off the bandwagon.

What can I say about the former finance minister? I do not know whether to give the Deputy Prime Minister and the government credit for having multiple positions. The former finance minister, who was here briefly, who emerged briefly from his bubble, has now disappeared again. In the course of all this he has yet to state any position of any kind other than a hint last week that he may support regime change.

I want to point out that the flipping and flopping and being on both sides on different days and simultaneously is not a position that has been characteristic of other parties and other people in the House of Commons, including those with whom I vehemently disagree.

The New Democratic Party has from the outset of the conflict taken the position that it does not support a war on Iraq period, not with the United Nations, not on Tuesday, not on Wednesday. It is just not for it. We all understand that.

● (1050)

[*Translation*]

The position of the Bloc Québécois is a bit more nuanced. They are against the war. It is based on their interpretation of international law.

Government Orders

[*English*]

Its support or lack of support for this war in the case of the Bloc, is clear. It is clear why it does not support it. It is clear under what positions it would support it. And it has, like the NDP and like ourselves, demanded that the government's actions, its treatment of our own troops, be consistent with the position that we are supposedly taking.

I probably should wind up here but I will point out that the leadership that has been lacking and which frankly this country could have used is going to be needed in the future. There are not easy days ahead for this world not just in international affairs but in domestic affairs.

Regarding our economy we are going to need to become more than just a country that markets raw materials or consistently lowers the value of our dollar. We are going to have to challenge the difficult trade-offs that are required to compete to lower our taxes, to lower our debt while providing for the real services that Canadians need. We are going to have to address the demographic challenges that the aging population presents so that when the Prime Minister finally retires, we can actually provide him with the health care and that pension he is expecting, as are many other Canadians.

There are real issues with the environment. It is not like the Kyoto accord. We just cannot pretend the economy does not matter, pass a whole bunch of lofty targets and say we really do not know how we will implement it and that is somewhere down the line.

These are all questions of leadership. They are all questions on which we are going to have to have a government in the future. They are all questions we are going to have to address strongly and that we are going to have to tackle.

Let me end in making one last appeal to the government to do the right thing. I believe that the government knows, and many members of the government know, that supporting our allies is the right thing to do. They should know that because if they had not known it, they would never have let our troops go into that theatre in the first place. Similarly, they know that anti-Americanism is wrong because if they think about it for a second, whatever their feelings about the present administration, they know that in so many ways we are close and depend on our American friends and neighbours.

I would urge the House to vote for our motion. If members indeed love our friends, if they indeed hope the mission is successful, if they indeed send our troops over in harm's way, if they indeed do not believe in the anti-American slurs that some have uttered, then there is only one course of action. It is to back our motion, to back our allies, to back our troops, to back away from anti-Americanism and to get back to our history and our traditions.

• (1055)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the motion before us today is somewhat surprising because it attempts to reconcile the so-called principles advocated by the government and practice, or how these principles have been applied. At the end of the day, what the government is trying to do is to cultivate ambiguity. This does not promote respect for these so-called principles, but leads to hypocrisy on this issue, instead.

Our party has been very clear on this since the beginning. Yes, Saddam Hussein must be disarmed, but this must be done through international institutions, by the UN inspection process, and it must be done peacefully. We said that this war was illegitimate, illegal and unjustified.

The government, it was explained by the Prime Minister himself, took the position that yes, this war is unjustified. One would expect, then, that all of the government's subsequent actions would be consistent with this position. Upon reading the motion moved today in the House, we see that we are asked to support the "the government's decision not to participate in the military intervention in Iraq".

It is important to see how this decision came about. It is important to remember that at the beginning, the government told us that it was a staunch supporter of UN resolution 1441, that it was sufficient on its own because it said that Iraq would face serious consequences if it did not disarm and destroy weapons of mass destruction. The government failed to mention that the final paragraph of the resolution said that the Security Council would remain seized of the matter and would assess whether or not the process of peaceful disarmament was progressing or not. In his reports to the UN, up until the penultimate one—he was not able to give the final report because the war was declared—Hans Blix was reporting that progress was being made. It was slow, certainly, but it was progress, and it was better to disarm Iraq peacefully without a bloodbath, without civilian casualties, without provoking uncertainty and anti-Americanism throughout the entire region. This is what is going to happen. We should have proceeded peacefully, but instead, it is being done by force, without any regard for the UN.

Then the government changed its position, saying that a second resolution was needed and then, later, that one was not, and then it reversed its position again to say that a second resolution was needed after all.

Here in this House we proposed that Parliament vote to insist on a second resolution. The government's position was to say no, that resolution 1441 was sufficient. Two weeks later, the government told us that a second resolution was necessary. It is difficult to follow the government's itinerary, except to say that it blows in the wind, depending on polls and on reactions from the United States. The government is trying to look after its interests with the Americans, but has not done a good job of identifying those interests, because criticizing the American position is not necessarily anti-Americanism. We shall come back to this idea a little later.

We have also proposed that this House state its position by a vote. The government has refused to accept a vote in the House. However, there is nothing more important in our lives as the public's elected representatives, than the issue of peace or war. This government asked us to vote on the Kyoto protocol because, they declared, the environment is important, and so it is. I say to the government that if the environment is important, the question of war or peace is just as important, if not more so.

Government Orders

It is because of the Bloc Québécois that the government is having to make known its position by holding a vote here in the House of Commons. And it is because of the Bloc's efforts during these discussions that the government came out against the war. The government's flip-flops were much more attributable to its fear of public opinion, which it was watching closely, than the fact that this opinion was based on principles.

Now, let us look at the second part of the motion we are examining today. It asks that we maintain "the unbreakable bonds of values, family, friendship and mutual respect" with our friends in Great Britain and the United States.

• (1100)

Opposing a position taken by the Bush administration or the Blair administration does not make us anti-British or anti-American. Being friends does not mean blindly following another government's decision.

It is in no one's interest to implement a philosophy of pre-emptive war. This is only the beginning. From now on, everyone will be able to point to this totally ridiculous notion of attacking someone because one day they might attack us. This can have very dangerous consequences.

The government paired the notion of pre-emptive war with the notion of an unofficial war. We are not at war, but some of our soldiers are. Try to make sense of that.

The same holds true for the regime change. The Prime Minister said that the government cannot support a country's desire to change a regime by force because it disagrees with that regime. The right way is through law, the rule of law and international institutions.

But now, there is support for a regime change. The government's position demonstrates its lack of leadership and a tendency to follow, depending on what happens in the world and in the United States, and particularly here, in Canada and Quebec.

The government told us that it refused to act without a multilateral framework and, particularly, without a UN framework. Obviously, the presence of Canadian soldiers in Iraq totally contradicts this government's so-called position of principle.

So, in terms of our friendship, naturally, we declare our friendship for the British and the Americans equally. But this does not mean rolling over and supporting everything the Americans and the British say. On the contrary, true friends dare to speak the truth, to voice their thoughts, in the spirit of true friendship for those who deserve it. This does not mean kowtowing to those we call friends.

The third part of this motion reaches new heights of hypocrisy in terms of Canada's position. It says:

our pride in the work of the members of the Canadian Forces who are deployed in the Persian Gulf region;

I would say instead our sadness for the members of the Canadian forces because of the Canadian position. This government's attitude toward the men and women of the Canadian Forces deployed in Iraq is one of contempt. How are we to explain to them that they are asked to participate in an a war that is unjustified? It makes no sense.

They are told, "You will be participating in a war that we are condemning". This is unheard of.

We asked the incredible Minister of National Defence if there were precedents, because we keep hearing that exchanges with other countries, especially Australia, Great Britain and the United States, have been taking place for decades. Military historians have been looking for three weeks, but none have turned up yet. We know full well that this was a lie and that there are no precedents.

I had a chance to discuss the matter with the Director of History for the forces, Dr. Bernier. I asked him if Canadian soldiers participated in the Vietnam war. There were exchange agreements at the time, and relatively longstanding ones—all will agree—between 1963 and 1975. His answer was that, naturally, they could not have, because we were part of the commission for supervision.

I asked him whether there were Canadian soldiers in Lebanon in 1956, and he said he doubted there were any in Lebanon, in the Dominican Republic in 1964 or in Grenada or Panama. This is when I was told that exchanges were mainly with British forces. Well then, did Canadian soldiers ever participate in the war in Northern Ireland as part of any such exchange? The answer was, "No, not so far". Where then did we have people on exchanges in wartime when we were not involved in the war?

The Prime Minister told us earlier that Lester B. Pearson and, later, Trudeau, had expressed disappointment and found the war in Vietnam to be unjustified. They were consistent. No Canadians joined the American troops.

• (1105)

Think of what we are doing at present. We are betraying principles, and principles are not something to be trifled with. We cannot say "the war is unjustified" and at the same time send men and women from our Armed Forces to take part. This is totally inconsistent. It is trying to please the Americans, while trying at the same time not to displease a number of other countries.

There can be no half measures with principles. You either have them or you don't. They need to be applied consistently in all situations, but that is not what is happening at present. The presence of our soldiers is in total contradiction with the position of principle Canada has on the war.

There is another element as well. With this motion, Canada would be expressing its hope that the U.S.-led coalition accomplishes its mission as quickly as possible with the fewest casualties possible. We too hope that this war will be over as soon as possible in order to avoid a bloodbath even greater than took place in Baghdad, in order to avoid killing men, women and children who have suffered, and continue to suffer, under Saddam Hussein and now suffer under the bombardment. We are seeing horrible photos every day now of dead or dying children.

It seems to me that, if this war had not been started, but that peaceful disarmament had been continued, we would have ended up with something far more concrete and far less costly in terms of victims. That is obvious. I still want to see a ceasefire, although I know it is a bit idealistic to say so. Nevertheless, it is sometimes better to express our desire for peace rather than accept this state of war, which is totally unjustified. Our government even calls it that.

Government Orders

In another part of the motion, the Prime Minister refers to the importance of self restraint on the part of all members of the House in their comments on the war, it would have been clearer if he had condemned the remarks made by some of his members. That side of the floor is where the anti-Americanism lies, not over here with the opposition.

We have spoken out against the American position; we have spoken out against the war, but we have never made totally gratuitous remarks about the American people. Criticism of the U.S. government is not anti-Americanism. Respecting one's allies and friends means being able to tell them the truth, to tell that what one thinks, to realize our friendship is good enough to withstand criticism.

This is not the attitude of Liberal members in terms of the current conflict and this difference of opinion with the Americans. Even ministers were not chastized for their comments. The Prime Minister should have clearly demanded that all those who made such improper, unjustified and unacceptable comments apologize and have said, "That attitude is unacceptable". He should not have pretended that it was all the members of all the parties here who were not able to show sufficient self restraint.

We said plainly what we thought, because we have enough respect for the British and the Americans to do so. We did not need to condemn Americans, because the Bush administration was being attacked on one specific point. This is called treating each other as equals. This is called taking a moral stand and not kowtowing, which unfortunately, is what the government is doing now.

With regard to the last point, that Canada would approve the reconstruction of Iraq, obviously, something fundamental is missing. The government is not fully behind the principles that it claims it is defending. The reconstruction of Iraq cannot take place under the Americans or the British. It must be under the auspices of the UN. Otherwise, the results will be not only totally unacceptable but indefensible and unbearable for the entire Middle East. The other people in these regions, for better or for worse, will not lend any credibility to a regime set up by Washington and London. Such a state of affairs is unacceptable.

I thought that, after September 11, 2001, the role of international institutions would be reinforced. Instead of being reinforced, it has been diminished due to the attitude of the British and the Americans.

•(1110)

The reconstruction should be different. It should be done under the direction of the United Nations, not of the United States. If Canada wants to take part in the reconstruction, it must do so under the UN.

I was also very disappointed and surprised to hear this morning that the Americans wanted to try those charged with war crimes before U.S. courts and not international courts. If there is to be peace in the world today, it must not be a *pax americana*. That would be another case of a country dominating all the other countries, and that is not good for humanity.

There is an international criminal court. It would have been nice if the Americans recognized this court, which they do not, incidentally, endorse. It is because of the fact that it is an international court, and

not a national court, that the judgments and trials involving Milosevic and those who plotted the Rwandan genocides were credible. We cannot accept this.

Finally, I must point out another contradiction, since I was just speaking of the international criminal court. There is another treaty that has been signed, the one on landmines. This is the Ottawa convention of which the government says it is very proud, and with good reason. Let us remember that the Canadian government has asked that cluster bombs be considered landmines. The Americans have refused. Moreover, they have not signed the Ottawa convention. They use fragmentation bombs the same colour as the food supplies being dropped for the people. Children get hold of them and you can see what happens next. That happened in Afghanistan. I thought we had learned our lesson. The government does not criticize this because, it says, there is nothing written down, and so it will happen anyway. That is hypocrisy. That is ambiguity.

If there is one coherent element in today's motion, it is that, for once, it illustrates the government's position very well. It is a culture of ambiguity, a culture of hypocrisy, and one that breaks faith with the Canadian tradition in which Pearson—who won the Nobel Peace Prize—firmly intervened in the Suez Crisis of 1956. These attitudes of servility and bowing and scraping will not help Canada construct a coherent policy.

As a Quebecker, I am very disappointed with the Canadian position which, for once under this government, appeared to stand out from its usual middle-of-the-road, unclear, inconclusive and indeterminate positions. Unfortunately, once again we see the sad spectacle of a government that says one thing and does the opposite. It is disappointing.

[English]

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak to the motion that the government has placed before the House of Commons today.

Before I address the motion that is under debate, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Prime Minister on his 40 years of uninterrupted service to Canadians. I am sure that not just members of all political stripes but all Canadians would also want to take this opportunity to congratulate him on his service to them. That is no small feat. We do have differences in our viewpoints more often than points of agreement, but on this occasion we must acknowledge the fact that he has served his country as he has seen fit. He has done so with surprising longevity and determination. The only other comment that I would make is that perhaps now having passed his 40th anniversary, he too will see that one of the calls to leadership is to know when to pass the torch to one's successor.

Before I address the specifics of the six part motion, I want to say that in a way it is a tragedy. It is disappointing that given today's decision of the government to take the somewhat unprecedented measure of introducing the motion, that it has not taken the opportunity to do what has been sadly lacking over the last many months since the beginning of the debate about a possible war on Iraq to state in clear principled, substantive, and unequivocal terms the basis for Canada's decision not to participate in the war on Iraq.

Government Orders

If the government had done that, it would not only have had our hearty applause and strong support, but it would have gained our support for such a motion which is not a critically important thing. More importantly, it would have made Canadians by and large stand tall, stand strong, and stand firmly behind the decision not to participate in the Iraqi war.

I have never been so acutely aware of how important such a statement could have been had it been made early in the debate or on the eve of Bush launching his unilateral war. Perhaps the most fitting occasion of all would have been for the Prime Minister, on the 40th anniversary of his election to Parliament, to stand firm for peace and do so in a way that would have aroused the sentiments of Canadians to support him, and to do it with a sense of real pride, promise, and hope and optimism for the future. The motion before us is sadly lacking if that were its objective.

This makes us stop in order to understand why today's motion is being placed in an unprecedented way before the House of Commons. When we look at the reasons that have given rise to the motion, it becomes clearer why it is a flawed motion. It is a motion that is fundamentally lacking in the call for strong and principled support for the position of non-participation in the war.

In some respects this is a motion that is reactive. It arises out of the fact that the government has been in many respects quite equivocal, somewhat waffling, and wanting to have it both ways. That makes it hard for Canadians to fully understand what the government had in mind when it decided not to participate in the war in the first place.

● (1115)

It is a motion that is pathetically reactive in the extent to which it is attempting to engage in damage control in response to the raving reactionary ranting of the official opposition, the Canadian Alliance.

I do not think that becomes a government that had the courage to take a decision which my party supported, a decision not to participate in the war on Iraq. In the process of the government thinking that it has to respond to the marginalized view, the pathetically uncritical, and in many respects un-Canadian view, that has been espoused again and again by the Alliance, the government abandons the moral ground and the strength of conviction that would have made Canadians proud had the government stood firm and tall.

I have just returned from three days in Washington. In my three days in Washington I met with many people across a wide spectrum. I was out in the community morning, noon and night. What I encountered, what I saw, and what I heard surprised me very much. Maybe it should not have surprised me, but in many neighbourhoods in Washington there were households that were proudly displaying wonderful signs like, "War is not the solution", "No war in Iraq".

There were events happening. There were proud, strong, and articulate messages opposing the war coming from Americans who no more support Bush's pre-emptive strike and decision to bring about an illegal regime change than do members of the House who have opposed the war.

What it made me realize is that the most fundamental flaw in the resolution that is before us is the notion that there is an American position which is absolutely pro-war and that there is a Canadian

position which is absolutely anti-war because nothing could be further from the truth.

It seems to me that if the New York City council can overwhelmingly adopt a strong unequivocal position in opposition to Bush's war, then the least we could hope for from the government would be that it could introduce a motion that would be at least half as strong, if not as strenuous in stating its opposition to the Bush war.

Why do I think the government has not had the moral courage to make the kind of statement that New York City council has made? It is because it wants to have it both ways. It has an eye on any possible negative electoral consequences there might be to having taken a stand against the war.

I happen to believe that Canadians overwhelmingly support the position to remain out of this Bush-led war. Surely there is no decision that a government can make that is as serious as the decision of whether to send troops to participate in a war. There can be no decision that is more serious. The fundamental principles and a clear analysis of what is happening in the world must form the foundation.

● (1120)

There are equally strong positions being taken by members of congress on a regular basis in congress and outside of congress. Barbara Lee, who has been so respected for her consistent position in the U.S. congress going right back to the launch of the war on Afghanistan said:

The doctrine of preemption does not make us safer; it makes us less secure. I believed and still believe diplomatic alternatives existed; diplomacy remains crucial to advancing our long-term interests

She goes on to talk about how she will continue to speak her conscience on issues of war and peace, and that she believes it is part of her patriotic duty as an elected official and an American. She states strongly that non-violent protest and free speech are vital elements of democracy.

If members of the U.S. congress can speak that clearly and in those principled terms, then what is it that prevents the Prime Minister of Canada, who has had the courage to oppose this war, to stand in his place today and make a similarly strong, principled and unequivocal statement?

Chris Van Hollen happens to be the member of congress in Chevy Chase, Maryland. It is just on the border of Washington, which is where I stayed on the weekend. He made a statement outside the U.S. congress. In his address, that he delivered to the University of Maryland, he did a scathing analysis and a damning condemnation of the national security strategy document in which a doctrine of so-called preventive law was set out. He called it a recipe for international chaos. These are proud Americans serving their communities who had no difficulty being unequivocal.

Let me turn to the motion that is before us. I do not think the government wanted to have the support of New Democrats when it introduced the motion. I personally find that surprising. I would have thought that if the intention was—and this is what the Prime Minister said—to send a message to the American people and the American administration of where Canadians stand, then it would have been a good idea to introduce a motion that met at least two basic tests.

Government Orders

First, that the position would be clear and unequivocal. Second, that it would be crafted in such a way that the largest number of members of the House that one could possibly mobilize would stand behind it.

It was perfectly clear that anything short of giving uncritical support to the Bush administration for just about whatever it might want to do, even if it is illegal, even if it thumbs its nose at the UN charter, and even if it violates well-established international law, none of those things would be an impediment to the government voting against a principled statement that could have been introduced by the Prime Minister or the Alliance.

However, if the government had wanted a clear, strong statement then it probably could have talked to the whips, party leaders, House leaders or talked to foreign affairs critics to get as broad a consensus as possible. This is not a motion which was given a great deal of consideration for its value in communicating unequivocally either to Canadians in a way that would make them feel strong and stand with the government with a sense of conviction and pride, or a motion that could clearly communicate to the Americans with whom we stand in solidarity in their opposition to the war.

If Canadians think about it, there are more citizens in the United States who oppose Bush's war than there are citizens in Canada that oppose Bush's war, simply because they are a much larger population and a significant number of Americans stand solidly in opposition to the war. It is solidarity toward the Americans who stand in opposition to the war that should have been one of the things in the mind of the Prime Minister or the drafters of the motion that is before us. Clearly, that was not the case.

• (1125)

We have a motion that has six different clauses. It would be a big stretch to rationalize our way, and I say that as a New Democrat, to support more than one or two of those six clauses.

The very first one refers to a reaffirmation of the government's decision to not participate in military intervention in Iraq. Of course we would support a reaffirmation of the decision not to participate. However let us be clear, even that clause is problematic in that it does not acknowledge the reality that Canadian military men and women are participating in the war in Iraq.

The government cannot have it both ways. Perhaps I feel it more strongly and perhaps my colleague from Dartmouth and my colleague from Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore feel it more strongly than some members, but other members here also represent communities in which there is a very strong military presence, where there are military bases, navel ships and military planes, for example.

We find it very difficult to have the government on the one hand saying that we are not participating in the war, then ending up reluctantly admitting, because the evidence could not be quashed, that in fact there are Canadian ships accompanying warships and that, yes, some Canadians are actually part of the AWACS program, which means that they are participating directly in the targeting of bombs directed at Iraqis. Now that there are pictures identifying the actual members of the Canadian military, who are on tanks and who are part of the brigade rolling into Basra and Baghdad, the

government has admitted that they are there because we had an agreement and we could not break our agreement. That is wrong.

What my colleague, the defence critic, very quickly zeroed in on is that those agreements provide explicitly for Canada to withdraw its troops under the conditions of another government, with whom we are involved in an exchange program, going to war, a war in which we are not participating. However did the government avail itself of that measure which, to my understanding, it has always done in the past? No. It wanted to have it both ways so it decided to leave those troops in the situation and did not recall them.

Second, we have no problem supporting the reaffirmation of our bonds with the American family. Most of us have family in the U.S. Many of us, as the Prime Minister himself has said, have lived in the U.S. and have studied in the U.S., and go, as I did on the weekend, to reaffirm some of those bonds.

Third however, the government members talk about the work of members of Canadian Forces who are deployed in the Persian Gulf. Of course we pray for their safety but we do not agree with the government's complicity and the government's duplicity in not acknowledging their direct participation in the war.

Fourth, our hope is that the U.S.-led coalition accomplishes its mission as quickly as possible. Of course we pray for the fewest possible numbers of casualties. The way to ensure that is to invoke the ceasefire for which we and humanitarian agencies have been calling because people are starving or are nearing starvation. People are being killed by cluster bombs which should be absolutely illegal. People are not only being killed now by weapons that are based on depleted uranium but who will be killed for years and decades in the future. That is why we need a ceasefire.

• (1130)

For us to say that we support Bush in the accomplishment of his mission is just wrong-headed because his mission is regime change. His mission is to conduct a pre-emptive strike which is against all international law.

Fifth is the importance of self restraint in anti-American rhetoric. We should not just be saying, "while our American friends are in battle", which is what the clause says. We should restrain ourselves from comments that are anti-American, period. When any one of us engage in that, we should call each other on it, and I say that with respect to my own members.

My last comment is on the commitment of Canada to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq. It surely is a glaring omission for the government not to have stated that the reconstruction of Iraq should be conducted under UN auspices. Even Tony Blair is vociferously arguing publicly with George Bush to say that it has to be under UN auspices. The government does not even have the vision, the courage or the intestinal fortitude to tell George Bush the truth, which is that he cannot lead the reconstruction of Iraq without there being massive problems.

Government Orders

In conclusion anybody who wants to understand how lacking this statement is in comparison to what it could have been should visit, as I had the privilege to do on the weekend, the FDR memorial in the heart of Washington on the edge of the Potomac. In statement after statement, engraved in stone to last forever, were the kind of inspirational statements that would have made the Canadian people proud and would have been an important message to the American people, had the government seen fit and had the vision to do that in this statement today.

More than an end to war we want an end to the beginnings of all war. Unless the peace that follows recognizes that the whole world is one neighbourhood and does justice to the whole human race, the germs of another war will remain as a constant threat to mankind. The structure of world peace cannot be the work of one man, or one party or one nation. It must be a peace which rests on the co-operative effort of the whole world.

Those kinds of statements made in the 1930s and early 1940s by Franklin Delano Roosevelt would have been the kind of statement that would have made every member of this House stand and cheer our Prime Minister today as a leader with whom we could be proud, leading a government that should be proud enough of its non-participation in the war to state it unequivocally, not in the kind of waffling, wobbling, contradictory way in which this motion has been worded.

• (1135)

Hon. David Kilgour (Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not asking this in a partisan sense but I would appreciate it if my friend would tell us how she thinks Iraq can best be rebuilt now. What role would she see for the UN and what role would she see for Canada? I think the House would be very interested to hear her views on those issues.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Speaker, the very first principle is that in the motion before us his Prime Minister has failed to state that the reconstruction of Iraq absolutely has to be conducted under United Nations auspices. I listened carefully to what the Prime Minister said and I do not disagree with him. It seems obvious. It seems like a no-brainer to say that the UN cannot do it alone. However that is not the issue which is at the heart of this debate.

The issue is that the United States is the aggressor in the context of Iraq. It is acknowledged to be the aggressor in any meaningful sense in terms of international law and international tradition. To now be pussyfooting around and willing to say something as meaningless as we reaffirm the commitment of Canada to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq is surely a failure to say that the first and most important principle is that it has to be under the UN auspices. Can the UN carry it out alone? No, of course not. Is there a critically important role for Canada? Absolutely.

We are familiar with the concept of peace dividends. If one of the non-participation dividends which Canada can actually cash in on is that we have not been a participant, then we should be front and centre and offer to be part of working on the very frontlines, under UN auspices, to help deal with the human tragedy now evident for the world to see. The massive devastation of infrastructure was already a big problem before Bush commenced the war. We already knew already was massive devastation to the infrastructure, which

has not been rebuilt in the last 12 years. That is a job that desperately needs to be done.

If the government wanted to say honestly that one of the big problems with the U.S. being absolutely in charge of the reconstruction of Iraq, in addition to how ridiculous a notion it is, having been the aggressor against international law, it could have because there are already signs that several people senior and central to the Bush administration are closely connected to companies. Already alarm bells are going off and the whistle is being blown because of conflicts of interest and improper tendering for massive contracts.

In the long run one thing we want to be part of, and it has nothing to do with anti-Americanism but with decent rules of fairness, transparency and non-conflict of interest, is saying that no one should be permitted to enrich themselves economically as a result of being in on the ground floor under a U.S. directed reconstruction of Iraq. We fail to say that in this motion.

• (1140)

Hon. David Kilgour: Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows there is a huge amount of oil in Iraq. I think it is the second largest in the world. How would she use the oil of Iraq in a way that would help the people of Iraq who desperately need it, as she said? How much of the oil of Iraq would she use and in what way to rebuild the country?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Speaker, these are very delicate questions and very important questions in terms of how they get worked out. The first principle is it would have been helpful if this had been spelled out under Canada's notion of the reconstruction of Iraq.

One thing for darn sure is that it should be the United Nations working with the family of nations in an open, accountable way, which is part of working with whatever new administration is put in place. There is no question that will be very difficult in the short run. However it certainly should not follow the dictates of the world's biggest oil companies that can benefit immensely from policy decisions that are made about how, when and where the oil will be developed. Again, the first principle needs to be for the benefit of the people of Iraq.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we continue to hear from the NDP these juvenile arguments that the motivation for the United States, and probably its allies, to be involved in Iraq has to do with some kind of a financial gain.

One does not even have to take economics 101 to know that at a time of instability U.S. oil and gas companies and Canadian oil and gas companies, with the cost of oil and gas being so high, are actually making profits now. The United States and its allies have very clearly stated that Iraqi oil is there for the people of Iraq.

Is the member saying that the United States and its allies are lying when they say that the Iraqi oil is there for the people of Iraq? Why do I not hear her comments? She may have commented, but why do I not hear her commenting on the fact that France has huge oil and gas contracts with Iraq and has broken UN resolutions to get those contracts? Could she comment on that please?

Government Orders

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Speaker, what the member has done is reaffirm the reason the reconstruction of Iraq, including how the oil resources of Iraq are developed for the benefit of the Iraqi people, must be carried out under UN auspices. As long as there is a lack of accountability and transparency about who is really benefiting, then there is the potential for there to be distortion.

The member for Okanagan—Coquihalla says, but the U.S. has said that the oil will be developed for the benefit of the people of Iraq. The U.S. has said that it is engaging in regime change for the benefit of the people of Iraq and that it is bombing Iraqis for the benefit of the people of Iraq. The best of intentions are often paving the way to hell and that is why we have to have UN auspices for the reconstruction of Iraq.

• (1145)

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, I noted that the Prime Minister opened his debate with reference to a *Winnipeg Sun* headline of March 27 purporting to be about a speech that I delivered in that city the day before.

The *Winnipeg Sun* published this correction on March 29, and I quote:

The headline on page 6 Thursday to a story on federal Conservative Leader Joe Clark's speech in Winnipeg did not accurately reflect the story's contents. The Sun regrets the error.

That correction was sent directly to a Jim Munson, whoever he is, of the Prime Minister's press office, on March 31. Therefore the Prime Minister knew the statement with which he opened today's debate to be false. He knew it was false. He chose to start a debate on a critical international issue by deliberately repeating a falsehood.

What is so troubling about this is how typical it has been of the government's response to questions or to criticism from all parties, with all our disagreements here on the opposition side. For two weeks now serious questions by serious members of Parliament in all parties in opposition have been put and the government has not answered with answers. It has responded with insults, as it did again today. What that indicates is a sure sign that the government is ashamed of its position and a sure sign that it cannot defend its position on its merits.

Canada says that it will not participate in the war. It then knowingly sends Canadian soldiers on exchange to war zones. The Prime Minister might not participate but he is quite prepared to put the lives of Canadian soldiers at mortal risk. That is the height of both hypocrisy and irresponsibility. The great joke is that Canada is acting on principle. The Prime Minister's only principle is to avoid taking a position.

[*Translation*]

We were once known as a country that acted on principle, not just on polls or domestic popularity. War is always inhuman. The real issue with this war is whether it is legitimate in international law. Serious scholars disagree on that issue.

In the absence of formal legal opinions from Canada's government—I asked but it would not provide them—I believe that existing Security Council resolutions give the legitimacy of the United Nations to this intervention. I accept the considered view of the Government of the United Kingdom that the combination of

resolutions 678, 687 and 1441 provide the authority required. However, for the Government of Canada, the question of principle does not matter.

The foreign minister says, and repeats, that for moral, principled Canada, it is not a matter of determining whether military action is legitimate or otherwise. What if we had said that about Tiananmen Square or about South Africa, or about human rights?

Canada was once a country that set the highest standard of respecting international law, but the government does not care whether the action is legal or illegal. We have blown away one of Canada's most important and distinctive credentials.

• (1150)

[*English*]

The real issue today in Iraq is not about war. It is about the best way to improve the prospects of peace and stability after the war. Canada can play a major role. Instead, once again we seem to be stepping aside.

The government has announced \$100 million in humanitarian aid, and that is a good start. Individual Canadians are making our own contributions, although relief organizations say those contributions are slower and smaller than needed.

However, humanitarian aid, while essential, is very different from reconstruction. War takes things apart. Reconstruction pulls them back together. It is more than food, more than aid, more than building dams and more than building roads. It is the sensitive work of healing open wounds, of reconciling sharp differences and of encouraging institutions which the Iraqi people themselves will see over time and for the long haul as being legitimate institutions.

The question is: Who can best lead reconstruction in Iraq? As a practical matter, the choice is between the United States, which has a team and a plan in place, and the United Nations which needs the authority of a new Security Council resolution before it can act.

On March 27, Canada's ambassador to the United Nations, Mr. Heinbecker, said that we wanted the United Nations to have the authority and to lead reconstruction. Since then there has been absolutely no evidence at all of any follow up action by Canada. There was none in the Prime Minister's speech today, not a mention, in a situation where Tony Blair found it urgent enough to fly from London to Washington to make the case for the UN, and when the Australians sent their highest spokespeople to Washington to make the case for the UN.

Government Orders

When the case for the UN was being made by presidents and prime ministers throughout Europe and Asia, the Prime Minister of Canada, instead of using the opportunity that he already had to go to Washington to make that case, cancelled his trip. He was either afraid to make the case to the Americans or his excuse was that he really believed that it was not a suggestion one makes in a time of war. Well, when in the world does one make that kind of contribution?

If it was controversial for Canada to sit out the war, it would be unconscionable for Canada to stand back from reconstruction. As I have said, France, Britain, Australia, Germany and a host of other countries have argued forcefully for a lead UN role. They have spoken through their premiers, their presidents and their prime ministers. By contrast, our quiet intervention was by an ambassador, a skilled ambassador, but an official, not an elected leader.

While Tony Blair found reasons to go to Washington and make the case directly to the president, the Prime Minister found reasons, as I said, to cancel his trip.

When I and other members of Parliament put questions in Parliament about reconstruction, they are answered by the minister responsible for international development, not the Prime Minister, not even the foreign minister. Her response is about aid, not about reconstruction.

I pray that the government will recognize the unique influence that Canada could have, both in building consensus about a UN role and in the reconstruction itself, a reconstruction that requires precisely the skills for which Canada is and has been celebrated around the world.

The stakes are dangerously high. Both Iraq and the region are turbulent. War deepens those natural tensions, those suspicions, those ambitions. Fairly or not, the Arab "street" believes that the Americans' real interest is oil. The deadly impasse between Israel and the Palestinians is an open wound.

Moreover, some influential figures in the Bush administration are thought to believe that they can use the aftermath of war to build, in the Middle East, regimes that are more like America in their value systems and in their institutions.

• (1155)

In those circumstances, the Pentagon, for all of its skills, is bound to be seen as the engine of attack and not the instrument of reconstruction. Yet, unless clear authority is given to the United Nations, reconstruction will fall to the Pentagon by default.

The British have not been inactive. The British, for at least three weeks now, have been travelling the world trying to identify the names of prominent world leaders who may be able to head up the kind of UN effort that will be needed. They have been making their case directly, on several occasions, most recently yesterday, face to face with the President of the United States.

Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations, has himself already designated an esteemed Pakistani diplomat to play a lead role in the United Nations operation.

Canada is not on the Security Council, but no one in the House would doubt the influence that we have on countries that are on that council or, indeed, on other member nations of the United Nations that could influence a decision taken by the Security Council. Of course, it will not be easy.

The Americans want to contain the British for reasons that one understands. Since they had the courage to go in and to take the lead in the war, they want to have as much an imprint as possible upon the reconstruction. They must be persuaded otherwise. A compelling case must be made. But that case will not come out of the air. That case must be put forward by a respected, strong, international country like Canada. We should be doing it, and there is no evidence at all that we have lifted a finger in that regard. We are sitting out the peace, just as we sat out the war.

Right now, we should be in touch with countries that have reputations like ours; Nordic countries, for a start. We should be working closely with Japan, which has skills on peacekeeping and institution building. We should be in touch with South Africa, which is the most recent society to have successfully faced the problem of a divided internal community and has, through its truth and reconciliation commission, found a way to begin the healing process in a way that bore a South African accent, not the accent of something imposed by some other power. We should be building consensus for United Nations action and we should be doing that now.

Reconstruction, obviously, must start by building order. There is a war on. There will be conditions of war for a certain period of time. Some members of the House might not like it, but the reality is that in the early days after the conflict is formally over, the principal role in maintaining a simple system of order will fall to armies, the United States army, the United Kingdom army and the army of Iraq because it is one of the national institutions which enjoys respect through that country.

We cannot blast away everything that is there. We must take what we can trust, obviously changing the leadership, but take the structures that are there that we can trust to establish a basic elemental order, whether that is civil order normally assigned to police or whether it is a larger order normally assigned to armies. But stage one, the army stage, the Pentagon stage, should be over as early as possible.

Then we must get to the second stage, the stage of building confidence, rebuilding a society, and reconstruction. That must be carried forward by the United Nations.

There is a need to draw together communities that have never been together but have been drawn more desperately apart in recent days. There is a real need to heal the wounds of war. There is a fundamental need, a need in which Canada can play a primary role, to establish a kind of federalism that might work in a society of that kind, a federalism based on regions not on culture or religion, to build institutions that flow naturally from the traditions and the needs of the Iraqi people. Those are things that we are good at and that the UN is good at. They are not things that armies are good at. So there needs to be, in this second stage, a real emphasis upon that work of reconstruction. We should be making that a Canadian priority here.

Government Orders

• (1200)

I admire the Minister for International Cooperation. I envy her portfolio. It is one of the most interesting portfolios in government and she does it well. However, she cannot speak for the government or the country on the question of reconstruction. For one thing, the government alone needs to draw in the larger Canadian communities. There are non-governmental organizations with immense talents in this regard. There are experts in institution building across this country. There are people who are prepared to go themselves or to send money to help in this project.

I am reminded, and some members of the House will remember the parallel, of a different kind of crisis to which Canada responded when famine struck Ethiopia. Instead of simply responding in the normal governmental way through CIDA or through the Department of Foreign Affairs, the government of that day established a special cross-departmental project led by a former colleague of mine, the hon. David MacDonald. It had a capacity to draw upon non-governmental organizations. By its very nature it demonstrated that this was a matter which was of particular importance to Canada.

To whom might we turn if we were to establish some kind of urgent Canadian task force on Iraqi reconstruction? I can think of some names from the public service offhand. I think of General John de Chastelain, who has performed excellent service in Ireland in circumstances that are not terribly dissimilar. I think of Margaret Catley-Carlson, a distinguished former deputy minister of health and former president of CIDA, who herself has headed international agencies dealing with children allied with the United Nations. I think of Huguette Labelle, a former chair of the Public Service of Canada, a former president of CIDA, and a distinguished Canadian public servant. That is just the beginning, and that is just from the public sector. There is a range of Canadians who could be drawn together if the government had the will to have Canada play a major role in reconstruction.

Let me raise one other matter that is of great concern to myself and to others. I alluded to the view among some in the Pentagon that this opportunity of post-war should be seized to try, not only in Iraq but elsewhere in the region, to establish a regime of values more like America. I consider that to be a prospect full of problems. It is something that we must deal with.

Last week, a former colleague of mine, a former secretary of state in the United States, and a person clearly prominent in the senior ranks of the Republican Party of the United States, James Baker, came to Toronto to spell out a vision of reconstruction that was very different from that being proposed in certain corners of the Pentagon. It is one that is more similar to the Canadian tradition. I found it interesting that Secretary Baker did not go to London. He did not speak to Paris. He came to Canada. He came to the one country that he knew was most likely to be inclined, and to have the capacity and the influence to mobilize this kind of alternative.

The world is faced with a real choice between what the United Nations can do in reconstruction and what might be left to the Pentagon. There is a division of view in the United States at its most senior levels. If we were looking to reassert our reputation with our neighbours, if we were looking to reassert our reputation as a country that could count in the world and change the world, this would be an

ideal opportunity. We have the skills and the influence. There is an urgent need to do it. It is a by-product of doing what we should be doing as a country. In the world's interest we could materially improve our reputation with our neighbours, whether they know it or not, who need our help on this issue. We can certainly improve our reputation in the world and help make a material contribution to reconstruction in a land which, if it is left as things are now, could simply slide into some new kind of chaos.

• (1205)

Hon. David Kilgour (Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific), Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my hon. colleague for his speech as I separate the positive nature of his speech from his partisan comments. Having participated with David MacDonald in that trip to Ethiopia many years ago, I wonder if he would have anything more to add to what he was saying toward the end of his speech?

Right Hon. Joe Clark: Mr. Speaker, we have found, and frankly I have found in other incarnations as minister of the Crown, that there are limits to what governments can do. Governments obviously must take the lead.

What struck us most about the response to the famine was that people in communities whom we had thought might not be interested became engaged in an overwhelming way. The most striking response was from the Innu community in the north, where people were accustomed to taking care of their own, to building communities.

However, I had a similar experience, as the hon. member will recall, in 1979 with regard to the Vietnamese boat people. The Government of Canada at the time offered to match the sponsorship of any private organization. The consequence was that Vietnamese refugees came to Canada in a higher proportion than any other country in the world.

The point is that if the government leads and sets up an agency that has the authority of the government, it is then possible to draw upon the myriad of talents in the country which are substantial and particularly germane with regard to some of the problems that are facing Iraq. Name a country that has had more experience with drawing diversity together. Name a country which, in its international mandate, has had more experience with dealing with the problems of poverty and establishing institutions which are seen as legitimate in the countries in which they are established.

This country has a unique reputation. I do not want to sound partisan, but it is a reputation which, for reasons of budgetary constraint, has been running down lately. I see the former minister of national defence here. Our military has skills that go beyond the typical skills of fighting, and has extraordinary skills in institution building and in rebuilding on the ground. Canada has all these skills. In addition to that, we still have a unique reputation in the world and a capacity to influence others.

I think one would find consensus in the House for the proposition that, notwithstanding our disagreements on the question of the war, there is a common belief that we should be active in leading the reconstruction. I think that would find support everywhere in the House and in the country.

Government Orders

I would be very interested, as I am sure other members of the House would be, if the government were to pursue in a more formal consultation, not in the heat of debate, the particular things that Canada might do. I am encouraged that the minister representing the government in the chamber has expressed an interest in this approach and I hope that it will be followed.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I wish I could share my right hon. friend's untempered faith in the ethicality and integrity of the United Nations, but I would like to challenge his faith in that institution, given its track record in reconstruction, and the attitude and mismanagement by the Security Council of the crisis which led to this very conflict.

Would he care to reflect on the fact that he would put the future of Iraq in the hands of the Security Council, among whose five permanent members, Russia, China and France, collectively sold 94% of the armaments to Saddam Hussein's regime between 1972 and 1990?

Would he care to reflect on the fact that he would be handing control of the reconstruction of Iraq to France and Russia, which have systematically undermined the UN sanctions regime and have sought favour with the Iraqi regime to extract enormous commercial contracts for oil development in other areas?

Would he care to comment on the notion of giving Syria, who has a seat on the Security Council and supports Iraq's success in this war, a hand in the future of Iraq?

Would he not agree with me, when he says that Iraq may slide into chaos, that the only thing that would be saving Iraq from sliding into chaos is not Kofi Annan or bureaucrats from Syria, but rather the combined military force of the United States and the United Kingdom which alone could provide short term stability that would lead eventually to a representative regime in that country?

• (1210)

Right Hon. Joe Clark: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I do not have an untempered faith in the United Nations. My faith in the United Nations is very much tempered and very much qualified, tempered by experience.

It has plenty of failures. My argument is simply that it is the best agency available. What I have been arguing here is that it should be playing the lead role. I cannot conceive of a situation in which the United States would step aside from a major role or the United Kingdom would step aside from a major role. Those major roles would have to be played.

I agree absolutely with the member, and I think I said so in my remarks, that the only instruments we can see that can guarantee short term stability are the armies. I would add the army of Iraq, because I think that as an institution it is going to be essential to establish cohesion there, but that is in the short term and I have no doubt about the military capacity in the short term and the essential nature of that presence.

It is the medium and the longer term that I am worried about. I do not know the degree of faith of the hon. member in the Pentagon and the United States to see this through. I suspect he has some reservations, as most people would. What we have to do here is find some system that gives the world a choice. At the moment, there is

no choice. There are a few lonely voices that are talking about giving the United Nations a mandate, but no one is taking the active leadership to provide that kind of mandate. That means that the burden will fall, by default, to the United States.

I commend the speech given by the former secretary Baker in Toronto and, indeed, the study undertaken by the Baker Institute and the Council of Foreign Relations on which that speech was based, which spelled out a different and much broader approach. That is in a sense what I am advocating here. I have not given up on the United Nations, but I am not blind about its weaknesses nor naive about its capacities. I simply think it is the best agency available to the world in these circumstances.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the right hon. member for Calgary Centre for his as usual insightful and reasonable remarks on this issue. I think he is right to be focusing now on the issue of reconstruction. Having seen the Gordian knot of a position tied by this government and the convoluted and contortionist attempts now to somehow reverse itself and its position, I think that in regard to the time for attention to what role Canada can reasonably play the question that comes to mind for most Canadians is this: Is it too late for us to have credibility on the issue?

I think the right hon. member has waylaid some of that concern in suggesting that Canada can still play a very significant role. My question to him is with respect to that role and having any real say in the reconstruction effort. Is it too late for Canada to play a substantive role in having an actual presence on the ground, given that we know the government has been disingenuous in suggesting that we are not there with ships in the gulf, with soldiers on the ground as part of British forces and participating in the AWACS effort? Is it not right to suggest that Canada could now acknowledge and be straightforward in saying we have people there and that we are going to condone that presence and send more if required, to have an actual presence and then get on with the job of reconstruction?

Right Hon. Joe Clark: Mr. Speaker, my view has been from the outset that this is an action authorized by the United Nations. We support the United Nations. We should have been there.

I think that it is confusing and hypocritical for the government to pretend that while Canadian soldiers on exchange are subject to mortal combat we are not there. Of course we are there; they are there. The Prime Minister might not be there. The Canadian Forces are there.

Would it be helpful for us in these late days in the war to ask for a presence on the ground? I think that would depend on how long the fighting is going to continue. The real question is, do we have the credibility given our recent record to make a case for the United Nations? I believe we have that credibility. If the war persists, then I think we should consider making an honest nation of ourselves and having our policy follow our practice, which is to be there.

Government Orders

•(1215)

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Just briefly, Mr. Speaker, could the member please explain to us the reason for the change in his position? It was not long ago that in this House and other places he was most emphatic there should be no intervention by Canada unless the UN Security Council approved it. Now I think there has been a change of position. Could he explain what influenced his change of mind on that?

Not too many days ago he was fairly frantically looking for a legal opinion about intervention. Has he found a lawyer who has given him the legal opinion so that he can also make up his mind on that issue?

Right Hon. Joe Clark: Mr. Speaker, I sympathize with the hon. member. Very often in the House when people speak a lot they do not have the opportunity to listen as much as they might like to.

The House would know that on several occasions I have cited, including today, *mais je l'ai fait en français*, resolutions 678, 687 and 1441 of the United Nations as giving to this intervention, in my view, the legal authority of the United Nations. So I believe that this is a conflict under United Nations authority. I have said that for some weeks. I am pleased to have the opportunity, I think having communicated that to everyone else in the country, to communicate it now to the member for Okanagan—Coquihalla.

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful for the motion. It gives me an opportunity to speak on the war in Iraq after three weeks of fighting. I should note, too, that I am sharing my time with the member for Brossard—La Prairie.

One thing that has emerged very clearly thus far into the war is that the coalition forces, the United States and Great Britain, are no longer talking very much about disarming Iraq. The issue now really is about regime change. I would suggest that all along the motive for attacking Iraq, with or without the UN, was to change the regime. Now we have a situation where, without the support of much of the world, the United States and Great Britain have attacked Iraq unilaterally with the intention of liberating the people from the dictator Saddam Hussein.

Oddly enough, Canadians have a special knowledge of the issue of countries attacking other countries in order to liberate them from despotic governments, because I point out that the very first time that the United States attempted to invade another country with the intention of regime change was the attack on Canada in 1812.

So far in the debate this has not come up, but the parallels to the present situation in Iraq are certainly instructive. In 1812, Britain was still at war with Napoleon and most of the British troops were committed in Europe. Canada at that time was British North America, divided into Upper and Lower Canada.

The Americans were fresh from their war of independence and had the attitude that people north of the border, the people in Upper and Lower Canada, would obviously dislike the monarchy and would want to partake in the new-found democratic liberties of the United States. Therefore, the Americans declared war and invaded Canada, fully expecting that the people of Canada, both the French Canadians in Quebec or Lower Canada and the mainly British and

some American stock in Upper Canada, would immediately support the invading forces.

The opposite occurred. Actually, the war of 1812 to 1814, which is not well remembered in the United States but is part of our lore, was a vicious fight undertaken mainly by militia in Upper and Lower Canada.

What surprised the American forces when they invaded across the Niagara frontier and toward Montreal was that instead of being greeted with open arms, the farmers, mostly the farmers of the areas, mobilized under the few British regulars that were available and fought back.

There were some famous battles. One battle was very close to my riding and that was the Battle of Stoney Creek, where an invading American army of overwhelming superiority—and we have to appreciate that in those days the Americans had overwhelming superiority—advanced up from the Niagara frontier and were defeated in a night battle at Stoney Creek in 1813, saving Upper Canada. The forces that defeated them were about 700 mixed regulars and local farmers from my immediate area.

The same phenomenon occurred that same year in Lower Canada, where again the invading American army overwhelmingly outnumbered the defending Canadian army, which was made up primarily of French Canadian militia, whose general was the Marquis de Salaberry. Again the Americans were defeated and pushed back.

In the end we should remember that particular war. It was a guerilla war. It was fought with irregulars. It was fought viciously. The Americans burned Niagara-on-the-Lake, and the British and the Canadian forces in retaliation took the fort at Niagara at the bayonet, and a lot of blood, death and destruction resulted. Here we have two people who are very similar in culture fighting in this particular way.

•(1220)

The lesson, the lesson of history, and why it is so pertinent to what is happening in Iraq now is that even though a country may have the best intentions with respect to regime change, when an invasion does take place ordinary people defend hearth and home. It does not matter who their leader is or was; they only see the invader and they fight back. These wars are inevitably vicious and inevitably fought with great loss of life and blood.

We can imagine the situation in Iraq now. This is the reason why I think that attacking Iraq was such a bad idea: The Americans and the British are coming in with their tanks and their soldiers in camouflage suits and flak jackets, with highly sophisticated weapons, sunglasses and night vision goggles, and they are fighting with people who basically have only a gun and the shirt on their backs. There is no question of the outcome, but the problem is what happens after that.

Canada was lucky, because in the end, after two years of war in which the Americans had suffered several defeats, mostly defeats in fact, there was negotiation with the British and a decision was made to call it quits. The war ended with no trade of territory on either side.

Government Orders

In the case of Iraq, obviously the Americans will win and Iraq will be defeated, but after that the danger is that there will be anger and hatred that will prevail for many years afterward. If the point of liberation is to bring democracy and freedom to a people, that needs to be the actual outcome.

I fear that the lesson of history tells us that whenever a country has invaded another country with the intention of liberation, when that country has not invited the other country or declared war itself, it has always been a failure. The war may be won and the battles may be won, but the hatred that extends afterwards has caused all kinds of problems in the years that have followed. One can cite very quickly a few examples: the Spanish-American war, in which the Americans invaded Spain—and Cuba and the Philippines—and fought a guerrilla war for five years afterwards. I do not think the Philippines or the Cubans felt particularly liberated. Vietnam is another example. We can do examples with Napoleon when he invaded Spain in 1808. He expected the Spanish people to rise up. In fact it turned out to be an awful, vicious war that weakened Napoleon's empire.

The point finally comes to this. There are two styles, two options, of bringing democracy, human rights, the rule of law, equality of opportunity and freedom of speech to the world. We can try to do it by force. What distresses me is that I think this is a case where the advisers to the president have convinced him that the easy way to bring democracy to the Middle East is by force. I believe that is doomed to failure. We cannot impose democracy on a people. They have to find it themselves. That is the Canadian way.

The war of 1812 was a defining moment for Canada, because if the Americans had not invaded, then the English Canadians of Upper Canada and the French Canadians of Lower Canada would probably have gone their own way and developed stronger ties to the United States and would have eventually been absorbed by the United States, but the opposite happened. Because the Americans invaded, it united the Canadian people to resist the invader.

I suggest we are now at another defining moment. The reason we are not in the war is because of essential principles. The Prime Minister said principles, and they are essential principles. That is because the Canada that has evolved from the war of 1812 is a nation that walks the talk. We really do believe in equality of opportunity. We really do believe in freedom of speech. We really do believe in democracy. We really do believe in basic human rights and the rule of law.

• (1225)

The reason why we cannot join in this war against Iraq is because it is against the rule of international law. Canada chose bravely in my view, because like Mexico we are incredibly intimately tied economically to the United States. It takes bravery to stand on one's principles, and this country has.

I can tell you, Madam Speaker, I am proud to be a Canadian.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, could the member explain to us what principles the government stood on in 1999 when it agreed to join its allies and bomb Kosovo without a UN Security Council resolution? The UN Security Council said “no” and the allies, including Canada, said “yes” to stop a madman named Milosevic.

What principles did the government stand on then that are not in place now to stop a madman whose bona fides are far more horrific than Milosevic?

Mr. John Bryden: Madam Speaker, respect for human rights. What was clearly happening in the case of the former Yugoslavia was that there appeared to be a genocide occurring. There was a major problem occurring.

I would point out that this question of whether we should unilaterally attack another country to liberate it, to bring democracy, is not a question that is driven by whether the UN Security Council approves or not. This is a question that had to be decided by Canada, in terms of these five fundamental principles, and the rule of law and the respect for basic human rights applied in this case.

[*Translation*]

M. Jacques Saada (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to address first all the families wiped out, in whole or in part, by the war and terrorism, wherever they may be and whatever their origins. I cannot and dare not imagine their loss. These words are perhaps small comfort, but I am forced by my conscience to speak them.

We are debating today a motion that I will address from a particular angle since, since 1998, I have the honour of chairing the Canadian section of the Canada-United States Permanent Joint Board on Defence, commonly known as PJBD.

This institution was established in 1940, under the Ogdensburg declaration signed by Prime Minister Mackenzie King and President Roosevelt. The board members are diplomats and senior military personnel from both countries. My American counterpart and I report directly to the leaders of our respective governments.

[*English*]

The PJBD is a unique and privileged forum for Canada. We are the only country that shares such an institution with the U.S. The PJBD has examined virtually every important joint defence measure undertaken since the end of the second world war. It reflects the profound common interests of our two nations on matters of continental defence and global peace and security. It remains as important today as it was upon its creation over 60 years ago.

I am very proud indeed of the role that PJBD plays in promoting the bilateral Canada-U.S. defence and security relationship, and I am very grateful to have the opportunity to be part of this important process.

• (1230)

[*Translation*]

First, I would like to express my pride in my team on the PJBD. This is a talented, dedicated and inspiring group of men and women who do a wonderful job of representing our country.

[*English*]

I would like to pay special tribute to the head of our military group, General Cameron Ross, who will be leaving us in June. From my seat in the House of Commons, I want to acknowledge the deep values of commitment and integrity and the acute sense of diplomacy of this brilliant officer of the Canadian Armed Forces. I would like to wish him good luck in his future endeavours.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

I would like to sincerely acknowledge the quality of our armed forces. I have spent time with many members of Canada's military in Quebec City, Ottawa, Comox, Bosnia, Brussels and elsewhere, and have found the same professionalism, the same upright character, the same humanity. They are a source of pride to us all. I wish to very humbly and very sincerely pay tribute to them all, and today in particular to those who bring us honour in the Middle East.

The last meeting of the PJBD, was held on March 19 at the Pentagon, within a few days of our Prime Minister's announcement that we would not be taking part in the war in Iraq. That was mere hours before the start of the military intervention in Iraq. I must admit that I had some concerns about that meeting.

[*English*]

My own discussions with senior officials of the U.S. reveal that our American counterparts were indeed disappointed in Canada's position. Of that there was no doubt. However I did find strength in explaining quite clearly that Canada's decision was one based on principle and taken by a sovereign government. I was equally clear in articulating Canada's stance, especially our commitment to multilateralism.

While our counterparts disagreed with our position, I do believe they understood. This was a case of friends explaining their positions to friends. We, Canada and the U.S., have worked hard to develop these kinds of ties which allow us to speak frankly about our differences.

Of course throughout history Canada and the U.S. have had disagreements but never have we let these disagreements compromise the core commitment of our two countries to the joint defence and security of the people of North America.

Since September 11, the nature of the security and defence dialogue has expanded and deepened significantly. The PJBD has responded accordingly. The last two meetings in Comox, B.C. and in Washington, D.C. have explored the broadening definitions of security with people from a variety of departments and agencies from both countries, including the RCMP, the Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Emergency Preparedness, the United States Office for Homeland Security, the North American Air Space Defence Command and the United States Northern Command.

As I mentioned earlier, the nature of the defence relationship with the U.S. has changed dramatically since September 11. I would like to talk briefly about how the relationship has adapted to the new realities.

The creation of the U.S. Northern Command in the wake of the terrorist attack of September 11 became a catalyst for the enhancement of Canada-U.S. security co-operation. The enhanced security co-operation agreement, which was signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Secretary of State Powell last December, was a significant achievement, and will contribute greatly to the safety and security of Canadians and Americans alike.

As is well known, the agreement establishes a binational planning group located within Norad in Colorado Springs. The planning group will co-ordinate binational maritime surveillance and

intelligence sharing, provide attack warning and threat assessments to both governments, develop contingency plans for binational military support to civil authorities and conduct joint exercises.

The planning group is headed by a Canadian general who reports to both governments. This binational co-operation and Canada's leadership role is unprecedented. The results that will stem from this initiative will improve the security of Canadians and Americans alike. In the event of an emergency it will save many lives.

In the war against terrorism, Canada stands side by side with the U.S. The outpouring of heartfelt support for the U.S. in the early hours and days following September 11 is well known. Our military contribution was and continues to be impressive on the land, on the seas and in the air.

At its height, Canadian forces in operations in Afghanistan and southwest Asia involved more than 3,400 personnel, the fourth largest contribution to the international coalition.

Today more than 1,200 Canadian military personnel remain dedicated to fighting terrorism in the Persian Gulf alongside the United States and other allies. Canada currently provides command to task force 151 operating in the Persian Gulf and Canada will soon be making a significant contribution to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

● (1235)

[*Translation*]

The list of areas of cooperation is too long to go into here, but it is nonetheless impressive and absolutely essential. For instance, there is the smart border declaration, which is intended to facilitate the safe and secure border crossing of goods and travellers so essential to trade.

[*English*]

I would like to address my last words to my counterpart, Mr. Jack David, the chair of the U.S. section, a man for whom I have great respect.

Jack, we have heard too many unfortunate comments on both sides of the border, aiming at our leaders, institutions or even our people. I know he and I will remain above the fray. I know we will keep focused on continuing to build together a relationship which is second to none. I know we will find ways to ensure that PJBD will do its share to alleviate the tensions and demonstrate the wisdom which is so essential not only for us in North America but indeed for the world, in full respect for each other's sovereignty.

[*Translation*]

My support of the motion we are addressing is not dictated by a party line. It is dictated by one very simple reality. If we cannot prevent war, I want to help build peace. That is the spirit in which I hope that this same principle applies to the United Nations.

Government Orders

The UN has proven incapable of preventing war, but it must play a key role in building peace. In this connection, I wish to express my very strong support of the comments made by President Bush this morning.

[English]

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I would like to dismiss something in terms of the position of members of the NDP. I believe in freedom of speech and debate and everything else but their arguments are not only juvenile but harmful. They continue to say that in relation to Iraq, the United States is motivated for the purpose of its own selfish acquisition, whether it be land or other interests.

I would like to repeat the words of Colin Powell who was emphatic on this point when recently asked by the Archbishop of Canterbury if the United States was not motivated in relation to Iraq because of it wanting to acquire land. Colin Powell responded by saying that the only land they were interested in was just enough to bury their sons and daughters who were fighting for the liberation of those people on that foreign land. The NDP would do well to consider that.

I also would like to emphasize the fact that the NDP's position has been consistent. It has not wandered in any way, shape or form no matter what the UN says in relation to Iraq. I do appreciate that consistency.

That is better than the remarks made by the Progressive Conservative leader who, as I mentioned a few minutes ago, stated that we should not be involved without Security Council resolution. He even furthered that statement on March 17 in the House. He asked the Prime Minister if he had a legal opinion as to whether this attack could be justified in international law.

Less than three weeks ago, the leader of the Progressive Conservatives, was still of the view that we should not be in Iraq without UN approval. Then he said that he did not know. Then he asked the Prime Minister, of all people, for a legal opinion. The Prime Minister has given legal opinions on both sides of the fence. Once he said that action was justified. Then he said that it was not justified. Now the Tory leader has apparently moved to the Canadian Alliance position. We still do not know what moved him to do that, and that is why I put the question to him.

Very clearly, today after the Prime Minister spoke, our leader dissected with surgical precision the body of the Liberal's position relating to the Iraq crisis over the several months, a Liberal body whose spine is hopelessly contorted as a result of the number of breathtaking somersaults it has performed over the Iraq situation. No wonder we so often see the faces of Liberal MPs contorted in pain every time the Prime Minister forces them to twist into a new position on Iraq.

While the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives have changed positions on this issue in terms of official policy, the Canadian Alliance position relating to Iraq has been consistent, it has been public and it has been clearly articulated by our leader and by others. Over the last several months it has not changed. As a reminder, support for this intervention by the Canadian Alliance has not changed.

When we put out our policy position a number of months ago on this issue, we said that we should support the UN process, resolution 1441 to disarm and all the other resolutions, as far as possible. We made a third point and hoped it would never have to come to this but it did. We also said that should any Security Council member falter in his or her commitment to enforce UN resolution 1441, then Canada could not be neutral, that we must stand with our allies in such a time. We repeatedly said that it would be strategically unwise and morally untenable for us to be neutral in the face of a force and a menace as devious, as twisted and as evil as Saddam Hussein. We said that we could not be neutral and we have maintained that position.

It has been gratifying to see public opinion move to that position as Canadians avail themselves of the information available on the whole situation. The polls have moved. We however have maintained our position. It is consistent and principled. The Liberals have moved somewhat with the polls.

Why did the Canadian Alliance and now most Canadians take the view that we should be with our allies? It is important to review this.

● (1240)

What would bring a coalition of freedom loving, freedom respecting nations to such a serious decision to actually intervene in another country to disarm a twisted dictator and lead to a regime change? That is a very serious decision. What would have caused that?

We have to recall of course the history of Saddam Hussein himself. Since 1979 as the dictator in that country, over a million of his own citizens have died under his hand one way or another. The huge majority of those deaths were during the Iran-Iraq conflict. Since 1991 over 100,000 Iraqis have died directly under his hands and the hands of his regime. The gruesome reality of this is becoming more and more evident as the allies make horrifying discoveries. Those 100,000 deaths are just since 1991.

We always hear the concern about Iraqi citizens. We are concerned about civilians who are dying and may continue for a few more days to die in this contest. Everyone should be very clearly reminded that most Iraqis have died at the hands of Saddam Hussein, including the children. The mortality rate for children under five years is horrendous in Iraq because of Saddam Hussein.

The 100,000 who have died since 1991 do not include those who have disappeared in torture cells. That number does not include those who have experienced the horrors of his rape rooms. Many times when those crimes are committed on people, those crimes are actually videotaped and sent to the families of the victims.

We are talking about somebody who thinks nothing about using acid baths and all types of other horrendous methods to eliminate those who would oppose him. Of course we are talking about somebody who has gassed to death thousands of his own people. The majority of those he gassed to death were women and children.

Government Orders

He has not lived up to the promises he made when a ceasefire, not an armistice, was struck in 1991 after he was finally pushed out of Kuwait. It took 46 days to do that, by the way, to push him out of Kuwait. He has broken every condition of that ceasefire and 17 UN resolutions. He has a past history of invading other countries. He has a past history of attacking other countries. He is a menace to peace and security who has a proven record.

Hans Blix himself said and still maintains that Saddam Hussein has not accounted for 6,500 chemical bombs he admitted he had. He has not accounted for the thousands of gallons of anthrax. He has not accounted for the tonnes of VX gas. We are now hearing that those awful elements are indeed present. Things are being analysed right now in that context. He has never ever accounted for those things which he admitted he did have.

He also has as a stated intent the annihilation of another nation. He is not only a proven genocidal killer, he is an intended genocidal killer because he wants to see the nation of Israel annihilated.

The United Nations in its wisdom felt that all of this added together justified an intervention. That justification has taken place. In this particular time when the allies took the decision to disarm that madman and set people free, Canada was not involved because of the Prime Minister's decision.

In 1914 when the allies took a decision to move against this type of evil regime, Canada was there with the allies. In 1939 when the allies took a decision, without the United States at that time, to move against a horrendous regime, Canada was there. In the early 1950s, again when the allies took a decision to stop a murderous regime in North Korea, Canada was there. In 1998 when a decision was made that allies should do some bombing in Iraq, Canada was there on that decision without UN Security Council approval. In 1999 when allies made the decision to bomb Kosovo to stop a madman by the name of Milosevic, Canada was there to stop the madman who had killed so many thousands of people.

What the madman Saddam has talked about doing is far more horrendous, is far worse, and this time Canada is not there. We are on the other side of the new geopolitical divide. Our allies are now Libya, Iran, Syria, communist China, Russia and Germany. We stare across the divide at our former allies, Australia, Great Britain, the United States, Spain, the new emerging nations of the new Europe. More countries in Europe by the way support the allied coalition than oppose it.

Because France vetoed it, said it would never allow the coalition to move ahead and it would never acknowledge that in the Security Council, our Prime Minister ceded our sovereignty. A decision should be made on the best interests of Canada, the best interests of democracy and freedom around the world. We gave that away because of where our Prime Minister stood on this issue, ceding our decision to France saying it would always veto it.

● (1245)

The people of Iraq will be liberated. They will remember the Australians. They will remember the Brits. They will remember the Americans. They will remember others who were there for them. They will also remember that Canada was not there.

Hopefully the government will gather its principles together and be so available to work to reconstruct, should we be invited, the very principles of freedom and democracy, that we can once again regain our standing in the world and stand as those people who believe in freedom and democracy and are willing to support it everywhere.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. SARS has had a dramatic and sometimes fatal effect in many areas since mid-March. Many businesses have been negatively affected by this disease. Therefore, I would like to seek unanimous consent of the House to pass a motion, that the government investigate measures to compensate medium and small sized businesses that have seriously been affected by the recent outbreak of SARS.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Is there agreement?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Hon. David Kilgour (Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific), Lib.): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague obviously does not agree with the government's policy. Does he think that Canada is well placed now to be of assistance in the rebuilding of Iraq and helping the people of Iraq recover their lives?

How does he think the enormous oil potential of Iraq might be used in that reconstruction in a way that will be acceptable to the people, above all of course, the people of Iraq?

Mr. Stockwell Day: Madam Speaker, I do think Canada is well placed to offer what we know. We have much to offer in terms of rebuilding. We have much to offer in terms of democratic institutions being built. We have much to offer in terms of understanding what economic freedom is about. The tragic thing is to date we have not been invited to do that and that shows a huge shift in position.

After 1945 Canada was the fourth largest military power in the world. Canada was asked, as were Mike Pearson and others, and I do not mind giving credit to a Liberal where credit is due, to be significantly involved in the formation of the United Nations, of NATO, to be involved in other discussions, GATT discussions. We have always been asked and have had a presence.

However, because we have diminished our support for our military, because the government has shown itself reluctant in terms of banning terrorist groups, because we have not been able to take a clear position, we have lost our prominence. We can begin to claw our way back inch by inch to become a middle power, a nation of influence because Canadians do have much to offer. I hope the government will start taking the steps to put us back on that path to having some influence again where it once was. We have much to offer.

Government Orders

On the question of oil, it is very clear that France is heavily implicated in its oil and gas contracts in Iraq right now. It has broken UN resolutions to do that and to be there. It has an untenable position at the Security Council. It has an extreme conflict of interest in terms of even suggesting it could veto it.

I agree with the position of the United States and the allies on the oil interests that are there. That belongs to the Iraqi people. As the institutions of democracy and a civil society are built into Iraq, the Iraqi people, and not Saddam Hussein, will begin to enjoy the profits and the abundance of their own natural resource.

• (1250)

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague the critic for foreign affairs for the Canadian Alliance on his presentation.

I would like to ask him about the political manoeuvring we are seeing today in the House. The Canadian Alliance brought forward a motion last week that asked the government to do some things and today there will be a vote on it, and here today we are debating a motion brought forward by the government. Exactly what does that mean to the member? Does he have any comment on the policy the government is using to bring that forward?

Mr. Stockwell Day: Madam Speaker, I may surprise my colleagues in the House in that I am going to give credit to the federal Liberals. They have the capability to play the national media outflow of information in a way that is admirable. They changed their minds, and our leader has already gone through a litany of their flip-flops. The federal Liberals have damaged Canada's reputation in terms of flipping and flopping on this. Then when the Canadian Alliance came out with a motion of support for the allies, not only did the Liberals rush to put out one of their own but look at how they marvellously controlled the flow of that for three or four days in the media. I am giving them credit. I am not complaining. For three or four days, they made it appear as if they were the ones taking the lead on this issue.

It is political gerrymandering to the extreme in terms of how they have set the boundaries of debate on this. The Prime Minister said, or I think he said today, that the Liberals do not support regime change. I am just reading their own motion here and they say that their hope is that the U.S.-led coalition accomplishes its mission. The mission of the allies is regime change. That is in the motion. However, the Prime Minister stood again and said he does not believe in regime change.

I will close by saying he also insulted many Canadians who have raised real concerns about the position. We believe in freedom of speech, and Canadians take different views on this. However he labelled Canadians who have raised concerns about this fear-mongers. He tells them to be quiet, that they are a bunch of scaremongers. However to date he has still said nothing publicly to his Liberal MPs who have used horrendous language in terms of launching their verbal insults and verbal missiles at our neighbours in a time of war.

Mr. Greg Thompson: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As evidence of how important this issue is to the government, it does not even have quorum in the House. I thought that we should bring that to your attention as soon as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Resuming debate.

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be here to speak to the government's motion today, although when we look at what is happening it is clear that this is simply a move on the part of government to do damage control.

The government is in trouble. It has shown a complete lack of leadership on an issue that is of vital interest to the country. It knew it was in trouble so the Prime Minister was sent off to Winnipeg. It has the finance minister, the former finance minister and future leader of the Liberal Party, the member for LaSalle—Émard, saying that the government had nothing to do with the anti-Americanism but neither the Prime Minister nor the government did anything to put a stop to that. This has hurt our country. Now that is showing up and the government is in damage control mode. Of course it has to be because its lack of leadership on this issue has indeed been damaging.

I will go through the government's motion piece by piece. The first section of the motion reads:

That this House re-affirm:

the substantial sense of the House, voted on March 20, 2003, in support of the government's decision not to participate in the military intervention in Iraq;

However I want to be clear that while that did pass the House, it certainly was not supported by this party and will not be supported by this party. We believe Canada should have been there with our allies to help remove Saddam Hussein and his regime, so we could get on with rebuilding that country, freeing the world and the area of this threat with weapons of mass destruction. We certainly did not support the motion, nor, in my opinion, should anyone else in the House have supported it .

The second part of the government motion reads:

the unbreakable bonds of values, family, friendship and mutual respect that will always characterize Canada's relationship with the United States of American and the United Kingdom;

So says the second clause of their motion today.

However the government's words and actions over the past months have shown exactly the opposite in fact. They have shown that the government and the members of the government, including cabinet ministers and the Prime Minister himself, have no respect for our friends to the south, our American neighbours. They have spoken out against our British allies and friends as well in many ways over the last months of debate. That hardly jibes with the second clause in their motion today.

The third clause of the motion reads:

our pride in the work of the members of the Canadian Forces who are deployed in the Persian Gulf region;

The government is here to say that it supports with pride the troops but it has done nothing to support our military personnel in action.

Government Orders

I will come back to that later because I believe that is probably the most despicable thing the government has done in this whole issue. The lack of leadership is one thing but not showing support for our serving men and women, not even acknowledging that they are laying their lives on the line on behalf of Canadians to rid the world of Saddam Hussein and his regime and the weapons of mass destruction, not even acknowledging that that is in fact what is happening, is absolutely unthinkable. Yet that is what the government has done.

The motions goes on to state:

our hope that the U.S.-led coalition accomplishes its mission as quickly as possible with the fewest casualties;

Yet the government continues to say that it is against regime change.

What exactly is the government saying? It wants the coalition members to be successful but it does not want Saddam Hussein and his regime removed. I would like the government to explain that. I think the Prime Minister still said that he does not support regime change.

I would like the government to explain to Canadians how on earth we can start rebuilding in Iraq and start providing the kind of aid and humanitarian action that is necessary if we leave Saddam Hussein and his regime in power. I simply cannot understand how the government can take those absolutely diametrically opposed positions and yet that is what it has done.

The government further states in its motion:

the importance of self-restraint on the part of all Members of the House in their comments on the war in Iraq while our American friends are in battle;

Translated, that means the government wants to muzzle the opposition.

•(1255)

Why does the government want to muzzle the opposition? It wants to muzzle the opposition because the opposition took a principled stand on this issue. Other opposition parties, such as the Bloc and the NDP, while I do not agree with their position, at least took a position on the issue while the government did not. It should not be allowed to muzzle the opposition nor will it be allowed to.

Finally, the government says that it reaffirms the commitment of Canada to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq. Again, how can there be any reconstruction in Iraq when the government still takes the position that it is against regime change? I do not know what it wants. Does it want the coalition forces to stop now, hope that Saddam Hussein and his regime will come from the ashes and continue to lead Iraq? If that is the case, how on earth can we possibly do what is necessary to allow Iraqis to build a free and democratic country over time? How can we provide them with humanitarian aid and the rebuilding that is necessary? It simply does not make any sense. The government's motion is not in line with reality.

I just want to point to the motion that the Canadian Alliance put forth last week and that will be voted on here today, the motion that led to the government putting forth its motion that we are debating today. I want to read this and I want Canadians to think as I am

reading this. Why on earth would the government not support this motion? I do not know that it is not going to but why else would it put forth its own motion?

The Canadian Alliance motion reads:

That the House of Commons of Canada express its regret and apologize for offensive and inappropriate statements made against the United States of America by certain Members of this House; that it reaffirm the United States to be Canada's closest friend and ally and hope that the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq is successful in removing Saddam Hussein's regime from power; and that the House urge the Government of Canada to assist the coalition in the reconstruction of Iraq.

That was the Canadian Alliance motion from last week. It will be voted on right after question period today. The government, I guess, will not support that motion. I would like Canadians to ask themselves and to ask members of the government exactly why they feel they cannot support that motion. It is difficult for me to understand.

The Prime Minister in his presentation said that the government stood on principle on this whole issue of what we should do with Saddam Hussein in Iraq. I think the position was based on principles and I want to go quickly through some of those principles.

I think the government's position was based on the principle of not making a decision when one is needed. It was based on the principle of not supporting our allies again and again over the past months. The government's position has been based on the principle of not contributing to removing Saddam Hussein and his regime from power. It has been based on the principle that Canada would be a spectator on the sideline, rather than an active participant in carrying out its responsibility as a serious nation in the world.

The government's action is based on the principle of reducing our country to a position where we have little or no influence in the world community. It is based on the principle of not recognizing that we do have members of the Canadian Forces who are contributing to removing Saddam Hussein and his regime. The government denies that. It is absolutely unthinkable that the government will not even recognize that so that these people can at least get the satisfaction of knowing that their country and their government recognizes that they are putting their lives on the line on behalf of their country in a very worthy cause, that of removing Saddam Hussein and his regime. That is probably one of the most despicable things the government has done on principle over the past years and over the past months.

The government on principle has taken the position that Canada should contribute aid to Iraq but do nothing to contribute to the removal of Saddam Hussein. How can we provide that aid if the regime is still in place? It has acted on the principle that there should be no regime change but now supports Saddam's demise, I think, but I do not know how it squares that. It has acted on the principle—and this is the real principle—that taking a stand based on polling done is the only thing that matters to the government.

•(1300)

Those are the principles on which the government has stood. I would suggest to hon. members that none of those principles show the leadership that Canadians deserve from a government and have not been given by the government.

Government Orders

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, my colleague, the member for Lakeland and the defence critic for the Canadian Alliance, raised a question of principle and whether the Liberal government was standing on principle, and introduced a number of questions in that regard.

I would suggest that the Liberals have taken a pretty unprincipled stand and, if they think it is principled, they are far wrong. I think they have tried to play on the anti-American sentiment that they thought was out there. Now they are finding that Canadians are rising up and saying that they support our American allies as we have in many of these conflicts in the past.

We see a government today that is quickly trying to slide into a position where it can change its position because the polls are not what they were a couple of weeks ago on this when the Liberals thought they would be on the winning side of this issue.

There are a number of parties in the House that have taken principled stands. I would say that the NDP has taken a principled stand, although I do not agree with it. The Bloc, I believe, has taken a principled stand, as well as the Canadian Alliance. I think that is what Canadians are looking for. They are looking for leadership. They are looking for people who clearly articulate their view and their vision.

I ask my colleague, should some of the Liberal leadership contenders, those who aspire to be the prime minister and who in fact will win the Liberal leadership once the convention is held and automatically become the Prime Minister of Canada, for example the member for LaSalle—Émard, not be putting out a principled stand and telling Canadians where they stand on this issue?

Does my colleague agree with me that the member for LaSalle—Émard seems to be hiding in his bunker some place and we need to draw him out to see where he stands on these issues?

An hon. member: Stop playing politics on this issue.

• (1305)

Mr. Leon Benoit: Madam Speaker, I hear a member of government saying that we should not play politics on this issue. That is laughable. When the Liberals put forth a motion there is nothing but politics. If they were serious about what they were saying, they would support our motion of last Thursday. I read out the motion. What possible reason could they have for not supporting that? They are playing the most disgusting kind of politics I have ever seen. I think Canadians deserve better.

The member has raised a very important issue. The three leadership candidates, the member for LaSalle—Émard, the heritage minister and the finance minister, absolutely have a responsibility to come out and tell Canadians their position on this issue. Because they have not done that, we have to believe they fully support the position of the government, whatever that is. I wonder if any Canadian will want any of those three members to lead this country when they are simply unwilling to come out and take a position on an issue that is so vital to this country. None of them have, which leads me to believe that they fully support the position of the government.

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Madam Speaker,

I was here this morning and listened attentively to the speech given by the Prime Minister. It was a fantastic speech on the situation in the Middle East.

On the other side, I could not listen for more than five minutes to the speech given by the Leader of the Opposition, in which he only mentioned dates from *Hansard*. If that is the calibre of the speech we are hearing from the opposition on the very important issue of the Middle East, I feel sorry for the opposition.

I have a question for the hon. member. If he is so knowledgeable about the situation in the Middle East and on American foreign policy, maybe he could tell the House who is next on the list? If he has this information he should please share it with us so we can all be enlightened by the policy of the Alliance Party.

Mr. Leon Benoit: Madam Speaker, what was clear from the Prime Minister's speech is that he and his government are in full retreat on this issue. The Liberals simply took a position based on public opinion. There was no principle behind it other than it was an easy decision to make because public opinion was 80% in favour of the position they took. However that position is changed now, so of course the government—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Order, please.

Mr. Charlie Penson: The member asked a question but he is not here now.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): We do not refer to members' presence or absence in the House, thank you. It is very difficult to hear when there is shouting back and forth.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the member for Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford.

I would like to say right away that I am very proud of the decision of the Canadian government not to enter into the war against Iraq. I know that victory by the English, Australian and American coalition is imminent. However, despite this imminent victory, we must make our position perfectly clear. My position is that I am totally opposed to a war that I feel is completely unjustified.

I have received a great many messages recently, some of them very critical and many of them raising the issue that our trade with the United States will suffer because of the decision not to support the war. I would like to quote one of our colleagues who said in caucus the other day—and I am sure that this colleague would not mind me saying it here, “What is more important? Money from trade with the United States, or human lives?”

On way or another, war entails casualties. Often, innocent people are involved, as is the case here, with troops sent to war by their leaders and especially families, women and children who are injured and die on the front lines.

Government Orders

• (1310)

[English]

The Leader of the Opposition talked about resolution 1441. He brought up all the flip-flops that the government was supposed to have undergone.

First, I would remind him that resolution 1441 was backed by all the countries of the Security Council, including the U.S. and the U.K. Logically, we could also say that the U.S. and the U.K. themselves flip-flopped. At one point they had said that resolution 1441 was sufficient for them to use as a step toward war and then they changed their minds. The U.S. and the U.K. initiated, with Spain, the second resolution they presented to the Security Council, in addition to resolution 1441.

If, therefore, they were satisfied with resolution 1441, why would they have presented a second resolution? If they did present a second resolution, surely, in fairness, they should have had to be bound by its result. However the decision really was if they won the second resolution in the Security Council, then they would go to war. If they lost, they would still go to war.

The opposition has brought up the veto of France. That was never the question. The fact is the second resolution did not have the backing of the small powers that made the difference; Mexico, Chile, Guinea, Cameroon, which resisted all the pressures to vote for the second resolution.

I point out that resolution 1441 had nothing to do with a change of regime. It was strictly about disarmament. In the view of this government, and so many governments around the world, disarmament was happening.

Now that the war is a fait accompli and is about to end, of course we hope for a rapid end to it. We certainly hope that there will be a cease fire soon, that the coalition will judge that its aims have been accomplished and that firing will cease.

We were told that one of the reasons this war was so imperative was that we had to get rid of weapons of mass destruction on the soil of Iraq. Today, after 20 days of war, there have been all kinds of rumours that these WMDs, as they are called, were found here and there, that so-called barrels of chemical warfare agents were found and that white powder was found. Every time these were tested, a new press conference was held to say that, no, that these were not weapons of mass of destruction after all.

We went to war on the basis of destroying weapons of mass destruction. The war is nearly over and we have not found any.

War, at times, is inevitable. We concede that sometimes there is no other way. We entered the first world war, the second world war and the Korean war. We felt that war then was inevitable. This time the war was not inevitable. The Security Council was dealing with it, inspections were working and Iraq was disarming. The reason war happened was the Security Council was set aside and a new objective came into being, that of regime change. If wars become legitimate to ensure regime change, where do we start and where do we end?

My colleague very fairly put this question to the opposition a few minutes ago. Where next do we strike in the Middle East and elsewhere? Do we strike against Libya? Do we go against Syria? Do we go against Mugabe? Do we go against North Korea?

Today we heard that our foreign minister made an intervention regarding Cuba, denouncing the tremendous penalties that had been visited upon Cubans who had spoken against the regime, namely prison terms ranging from 25 to 30 years. The foreign minister intervened to state that this was completely unacceptable under the declaration of human rights.

• (1315)

What do we do? Do we move against Cuba to remove Castro? Where does this cease, if the doctrine of pre-emptive war becomes the doctrine that rules the international world? How do we select the next dictator? What do we do if we do not like that individual and want to push that person aside? This is fraught with imminent danger because it is selective. Surely we would not select someone we could not remove. We would have to make judgment calls.

Was Tiananmen Square enough for us to take action against the Chinese government?

Mr. Charlie Penson: Milosevic.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: Milosevic, yes. What about the Soviet Union? We certainly did not interfere there. We let the Russians decide for themselves to remove their dictatorship.

If we start on a selective basis to declare pre-emptive wars every time a dictator does not please any one country, be it the United States, or the United Kingdom, or Canada or France, we create a world of international rogue states. We cannot tolerate a world where the United Nations, where the multilateral consensus of nations, will not be the paramount voice.

Since I am sharing my time with my colleague, I will close now by saying that whatever happens in this debate or the next debate, even if public opinion swings 90% in favour of this present war, even if I stand-alone, this war is unjustified. War is abominable. It is a last resort and not something we should tolerate.

I am very proud that our government decided to stand tall and go against the tide. If public opinion were to swing drastically, if the official opposition were to be right in the polls, I still think pre-emptive wars are totally wrong. They are morally wrong. What they do in the long run and the short run is to kill, maim and destroy populations of innocent people. Soldiers who are 18, 19 or 20 years old are being sent to war while the decision makers sit comfortably at home. I am totally against war unless it is proven inevitable. In this case, it was not proven inevitable. The people who decide on war should not sleep calmly at night.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member for Lac-Saint-Louis state his position, which I understand and respect.

A Liberal member said that under no circumstances should Canada go to war, especially without a UN resolution, although there is some debate as to whether resolution 1441 covers that. This relates to what the member just talked about as well.

Government Orders

We must remember that in 1999 Canada was part of the coalition that went into the former Yugoslavia and took out Milosevic and his regime. The reason given for that was because of human rights. Iraq had its own series of human rights abuses with the Kurds in northern Iraq some 10 years ago. Tens of thousands of Kurds were gassed at that time.

Was the Liberal government wrong to go into Serbia and remove Milosevic under this member's criteria?

• (1320)

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: Madam Speaker, there were two very significant differences between the intervention in 1999 in Serbia, Kosovo and Bosnia and the intervention in Iraq today. Active genocide was going on in that region at that time. The action was backed by a global coalition which was uncontested with the exception of Russia

Mr. Charlie Penson: No UN resolution.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: That is correct. There was global support, with the exception of Russia, to stop the genocide.

This time millions have been demonstrating. I took part in three marches myself, as did you, Madam Speaker. In Montreal alone there were 200,000 people in the street. Millions around the world have been protesting this war. In Spain, which is part of the coalition, 95% of its people are against the government. In Italy, millions have turned out. Millions have turned out in Britain in protest to this war. All around the world people are saying that the coalition should have not gone into it. I am very proud that the government took the stand it did.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, the member knows that I have a great deal of respect for him, but I am forced to ask this question. Since when is the life of a Kurd less important than the life of a Serbian? I do not understand his thought process at all. He says that in the Balkans it was a just war for us to have engaged in because there were acts of genocide going on.

We know that there has been genocide going on in Iraq. I do not really understand his thought process at all, where he is fundamentally saying that the life of a Kurd is not worth as much as the life of a Serbian.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: Madam Speaker, this is playing with facts. The fact is that the last gulf war took place in 1991. All the terrible atrocities against the Kurds, which all of us here denounce, took place in 1992. This stretch of time between the gulf war and today and the United Nations' many resolutions took 12 years. All this time, the nations of the western world, the nations that form the Security Council, tacitly accepted this thing by not doing anything all these years.

I must say that I praise the United States and I praise Great Britain for putting pressure on Saddam Hussein to disarm. At the time the war was declared, there was no active genocide going on. In fact, the regime was more feeble than it ever was. Disarmament was happening. The circumstances were totally different from the circumstances in the Balkans in 1999.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I also would like to rise and challenge

the position that the member has taken. Basically he said there is not active genocide taking place in Iraq. I would ask the hon. member, what do 5,000 civilian casualties a month, civilians killed by their own government, count as? There is the brutality of prisons established specifically to rape women, prisons established to torture those people who worked against the regime, and the gassing of ethnic minorities. What is his definition of genocide if those kinds of things do not fit into that definition?

• (1325)

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: Madam Speaker, we can play with all these facts. I think we could point to Zimbabwe, where 6 million people are about to die of famine. We could point to the Congo. We could point to all parts of the world. We could point to North Korea. We could point to Myanmar.

The fact is that global opinion counts for a heck of a lot. Global opinion in the time of the Balkans was unified, except for Russia, that action should take place. This time it has been exactly the other way. People are saying that disarmament was working, that there was a process going on which, overwhelmingly, by the people in the Security Council, in the United Nations at large, and in the global community, was backed 100%.

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister's statement in the House this morning made eminently clear once again the principles underlying the government's decision not to join the coalition in the war in Iraq, not to participate in the military intervention.

We worked through the United Nations to achieve the goals we share with our friends and allies. Those goals were also very clear, as the Prime Minister mentioned this morning: to disarm Saddam Hussein; to strengthen the international rule of law and human rights; and, equally important, to work toward enduring peace in the region.

Canada worked very hard to achieve a consensus in the Security Council and we were disappointed indeed when that consensus could not, despite all best efforts by ourselves and other allies, be achieved. We argued that a multilateral approach through the United Nations was the necessary approach to enhance the international legitimacy of our military action. In addition, the multilateral approach would make the post-war aftermath easier to resolve.

As the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and others on this side of the House have said, that decision, this decision and the one we had to take, was not an easy one. It would have been easier to agree with close friends.

The reference has been made to our being family in North America, and indeed we are. Like many in this House, I had great-aunts and great-uncles in Boston, which was typical of the Irish immigration that settled in both Nova Scotia and the New England states. I am one of many in this regard.

Government Orders

But even family members do not always agree. One must adhere to the principles integral to our view of a rules based system of international affairs. The course of action we chose must personify the values of this country and the people of Canada, and our strong commitment to the multilateral approach to the resolution of global problems has formed the underpinnings of our foreign policy for many decades.

In the face of global terrorism, it becomes all the more vital as the sole method by which peace loving nations can develop the strategies requisite to defeat those who would destroy democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights for which we all stand.

While we chose a different path, I was, like so many of my colleagues, extremely uncomfortable with the comments of a few. They were injudicious, to say the very least, and they did not, nor do they, reflect the views of this House. Nor do they reflect the opinions of this government.

The opposition's desire to continue to beat this dead horse is generating the media coverage they want and sending the very wrong impression that the views of a couple of members are prevalent throughout. The very opposite is the truth, but for the entire government to apologize, which is the opposition's suggestion, would mean, in the words of a wise pundit, that the sensible are carrying the can for the silly.

If I can move from the ridiculous to the sublime, the question of reconstruction in post-war Iraq, which the Prime Minister addressed this morning, is critical. Canada is working now with the United States and the United Kingdom as well as the United Nations and other multilateral organizations to plan at this moment how to help the Iraqi people after the war ends. We agree with Prime Minister Blair, as the Prime Minister noted, that the United Nations has to be closely involved in the reconstruction, but of course the United Nations cannot do it alone.

Canada is ready now to participate and has the expertise to do so. We have been involved in ongoing relations between government departments in matters of policing and building infrastructure. We have done this in peacetime. It has given us an expertise which is frequently reached for by other countries. We are very comfortable with moving forward in the aftermath of a military intervention such as the one we will face.

● (1330)

Just at the end of his speech, one that made me very proud as a backbencher, the Prime Minister mentioned the values that we share in Canada and he said that when those values are shared across the world it will bring us to a level of understanding of the differences in races, colours and religions that right now is not the status quo. Because we have the ability to do that, we will be able to export our ability to share our differences and to do so in multilateral settings. While we Canadians are always renowned for our humility and not at any time for being aggressive in attempting to export our values, I still think his touching on that this morning was very important, because those values of tolerance and living with differences are exactly what will be required as we move forward into post-war Iraq.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, first, I would like to mention that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Mercier.

I must say that I am happy with the position taken by the Bloc Québécois on this issue, because there were some very long debates among my colleagues. I think that our party's position has been consistent from the beginning to the end, because it is based, I believe, on fundamental values. Obviously, if we had focused on economic values, on political values and on values that reflect our status as a neighbour to our American friends, we would probably not have come up with our current position.

However, since the beginning of this debate, the Bloc Québécois has based its position on the fundamental values of friendship and, more importantly, respect for international law because that is very important to us. In fact, when individuals or when a society is allowed to flout international law, anything goes. What governs then is the law of the strongest, the best armed.

And so I commend my party. Since the outset, we have focussed more on fundamental values. That is why we are able to remain consistent when it comes to our position in this type of debate.

There are five parts to the motion before us. Last week we analyzed the Canadian Alliance's motion the same way. We have to look at all the parts and see where we stand on the whole motion.

The purpose of the first part is to reaffirm the vote of March 20. Let us say in passing, to everyone listening, that it was through the work of the Bloc Québécois that we were able to have such a vote in the House. The government did not wish to let the people's elected representatives speak. The Bloc Québécois made use of the opportunity provided by one of its opposition days to make sure that the important issue of whether or not to go to war was voted on.

Of course, the war had already begun, the ships were already on their way, the airplanes were probably patrolling close to Iraqi skies and relaying information to the ground. There were Canadian soldiers on board. But the important thing for us was that the people's representatives had their say on the issue. This is pointed out in the motion presented today by the Liberal Party, but we must still render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's. It was the Bloc Québécois that forced a vote in the House, and we are very proud of that.

The second part speaks of friendship. Those who follow their friends everywhere are often scorned. On this topic, the Bloc Québécois has also been consistent since the beginning. We have always maintained that just because we have a friend who jumps off a bridge, we do not have to jump off with him. Instead, we should warn our friend and tell him that it is dangerous to jump off bridges and that there could be very serious consequences for him and his family. That would be the international community, to maintain the analogy.

Government Orders

That is why, since the beginning, we have tried to tell the Canadian and American governments not to go to Iraq. There are many reasons, including resolution 1441, the purpose of which was to disarm the Iraqi regime. Its purpose was not to change the regime, take control or start a war, but to disarm Iraq through a system of inspections. We were in favour of that from the start. It is not surprising that, once hostilities began, the Bloc Québécois said it did not agree.

We thought we could achieve our goal, to bring down the regime and put across the need for complete disarmament, through weapons inspections rather than military intervention. We told our American friends we thought they were going about it the wrong way. As we see the images on TV, we are beginning to understand that civilians are the primary victims of this war. I think the Americans made a mistake, and we will keep telling them so. As far as we are concerned, the earlier this war is over the better.

We have a problem with the mention of pride. Again, it is a matter of consistency. How can the Liberal federal government say that we will not be participating in this war, while at the same time sending or maintaining soldiers in theatre in Iraq?

This shows great hypocrisy. This is something we have been condemning all along. We have always maintained that Canadian military personnel and materiel ought to be withdrawn, if indeed we are not participating in the war.

• (1335)

In addition, the reason for not wanting to participate is that the UN did not give its approval. How can the government tell us today that there are only 30 soldiers? The number does not matter. Whether there are 1, 30, 300 or 3,000 soldiers, the fact remains that they are currently participating in a military conflict in Iraq, alongside the Americans, the British and the Australians.

There is therefore an inconsistency in the government's position. Having remained consistent all along, we have no problem condemning the government for its lack of consistency.

It is not too late to recall our military personnel. Our questions for the past month have been about that. From the moment that, in response to a question we had put to him in the House, the Prime Minister said we would not be participating in the war because it was not under the UN umbrella, it became unjustifiable to have Canadian soldiers on the front line, in the Iraq theatre of operations. This is a shocking contradiction.

The fourth part of the motion expresses the hope that the forces accomplish their mission as quickly as possible. It so happens that the Canadian soldiers are currently under the command of the British, Australians or Americans, and that the American, British or Australian mission is to change the regime. The purpose of resolution 1441 was to disarm Iraq, not to change the regime.

Today, the fact that Canadian soldiers are implicated in a regime change in Iraq while on a mission is extremely dangerous. The Prime Minister was again clear on this matter. He said that if this were allowed, from now on, it would be impossible to prevent other regime changes.

Iraq, therefore, represents a first step. If the Americans are unhappy with the regime in Syria or Lebanon, they could change it, in violation of international law. Dangerous precedents are being set. It is not just the Americans, the Australians and the British who are doing it, but Canadians are also taking part in this kind of mission.

The fourth part of the motion is, therefore, inconsistent on two levels.

As to the importance of self restraint on the part of all members in their comments, I would like to remind the House that it is not the Bloc Québécois that started this controversy. The government's reaction is, once again, quite hypocritical. If the government did not agree with what its members were saying, why did it not sanction them? Why did it not tell them that this is not the government's position?

They should have been told that this is not the government's position and have been asked to apologize and withdraw their comments. The government's reaction, however, was rather weak. Today, there is a resolution before the House in which self restraint is urged, which is very weak, in our opinion.

Finally, the motion addresses the issue of reconstruction. We are witnessing the systematic destruction of Iraq with all the material and civilian losses that this involves. Now, we are being told that Iraq must be rebuilt.

I agree, but the UN, whose authority was undermined by this intervention, must be restored to its former role. There is no mention of this in the resolution. The Bloc Québécois believes it is important to do this, and if he did so, the Prime Minister's positions would be consistent.

The Prime Minister justified not intervening in Iraq because the decision was not multilateral. Today, he should say the same thing with regard to the reconstruction of Iraq. We cannot ask the Americans and the British to destroy and then rebuild Iraq on their own.

With what type of government and resources should this be done? The international community's participation is essential, and the motion makes no mention of this.

You will understand then, based on what I said in the introduction of my speech, when I said that since the beginning, the Bloc Québécois has been very consistent throughout this debate, that we cannot support this motion. This applies mostly to the third part, which congratulates our soldiers in Iraq, when they should not be there.

As for the reconstruction of Iraq, it says that we want to take part, but it does not mention that it must be done under the UN. The law of the jungle has got to come to an end now. We thought that this was over now, that might no longer makes right. Then the hostilities broke out.

What we want now, is for the UN to regain its credibility. A first mistake has been made, and we must correct it and proceed with reconstruction under the lead of the UN. It has to be the entire international community that takes part in this reconstruction. This community was excluded from the disarmament process, now it must be involved again to try to clean up the terrible mess that has been made in Iraq and among Iraqi civilian.

• (1340)

The reconstruction of Iraq is also a physical issue, because so much has been destroyed. If we want the people of Iraq to pull themselves together again, the UN must be involved. Power must be returned to the people of Iraq and we must help them rebuild their country. That will have to be done with the help of the international community.

[English]

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I wish to put a question to my Bloc colleague. We serve together on the Standing Committee of National Defence and Veterans Affairs and have participated in many debates on military matters before.

Would the member like to comment, extensively if he might, on the Liberal position? He made a couple of points in his speech to which I would like to allude. He stated that the Prime Minister said we would not participate. Indeed, we took a vote to that effect.

My hon. colleague mentioned that it was a contradiction and hypocritical. We have a government that in part 3 of the resolution is congratulating those armed forces personnel, some 32 that we have in Iraq, when they should not even be there according to the government's own vote.

I propose a slightly more detailed question regarding the Geneva convention. We have Canadian troops in Canadian uniforms serving in combat in Iraq. The government has given full permission and not ended the exchange with the U.S. forces. The government has not actually said that these troops are in combat and as a result has put them in a strange situation.

Does he think it is unfair to our forces who are serving there on exchange, that they may be outside the Geneva convention and not covered by it. What does my Bloc colleague think about the government's hypocrisy and what it does to our troops in the sense of not being covered by the Geneva convention?

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have this question from my colleague, considering his great knowledge of military strategy. I would, moreover, remind him that the Bloc Québécois has raised this a number of times in the House during oral questions. What would happen to a Canadian soldier who was taken prisoner? How would he be defended?

I must admit that the government's answers on this are pretty vague. We have trouble understanding who will defend our soldiers. Will it be Canada? The Canadian Red Cross? Who will defend the war prisoner? Will it be the command under which he is currently operating, instead?

Government Orders

This also raises the matter of who is in command, who is in control. This is important in combat units. We are told that they are under British, Australian or American command. But under whose control?

If Canadian soldiers are asked to lay mines, can they do so? If the American commander says, "We are spending the night here and we will mine the perimeters of the camp", and there are Canadian soldiers in the combat unit, are they going to lay the mines? They are under American command, but can they call their Canadian control and ask whether they can do this? These are all things that remain very vague at this time.

The same thing goes for the rules of engagement, about which we are merely being told that Canadian soldiers will be able to respond in legitimate self-defence. But what is that? If a Canadian is beside an American who is being shot at, can he defend himself? Or is he going to say, "They were not shooting at me, so I cannot shoot back"? This is all very confusing.

My colleague is right to raise the matter of the government's inconsistency in connection with the Geneva convention, the rules of engagement, command and control. These are all matters on which a great deal of confusion remains, unfortunately.

• (1345)

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. friend, with whom we fully agree in regard to this unjustified war, how he views the post-war period? Does he see a prominent role for the United Nations? What should this role be? Is it only in reconstruction or does it also involve reconciliation with all the countries in the Middle East?

Mr. Claude Bachand: Madam Speaker, that is a good question. I did have the chance to touch lightly on this subject in my comments on the fifth part of the motion. I will say a little more about it, since the hon. member has asked this question.

I see the reconstruction taking place under the UN umbrella. As I said in my speech, it is important to make the UN a respectable institution once more, and this is up to the international community, since it draws on many visions and values. With the help of the international community, it will be possible to move forward not only to reconstruction but also to reconciliation, as my hon. friend has said.

In fact, this war has broken many bonds of friendship, as much for the Americans as for the Iraqis and the Arab countries. Therefore, it is important, while proceeding with the reconstruction and reconciliation, that there is not just one system of values brought into play. The entire international community must help to reconstruct Iraq and to reconcile that nation with the rest of the planet.

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Madam Speaker, I too am pleased to speak on this motion, to say that we wish we could have supported it, but have no choice but to oppose it for many reasons, which we have been outlining since the debate started and which I want to review.

Government Orders

The first part of the motion refers to the substantial sense of the House, voted on March 20, in support of the government's decision not to participate in the military intervention in Iraq. It is odd that the government would recognize—that is what it is doing—that, as a result of an opposition day of the Bloc Québécois, whose motion was votable for once, this House had the opportunity to set out its position on the military intervention in Iraq.

Incidentally, it makes no sense that the government itself did not call on Parliament to express its support for or disagreement with the sending of troops to combat, because that is what it was all about.

Parliament said no. The government made a proposal, albeit at the last moment, not to support this war in Iraq. The very day the Prime Minister made his statement, I reviewed all statements made in this connection. Clearly, the whole time, the Prime Minister had left the door open to going either way.

He talked very eloquently today of the need to make this decision based on principles. I agree with this. However, the fact is that numerous times in this House the Prime Minister agreed with the fact that resolution 1441 paved the way for serious consequences. He told the House that this did not mean just a little parade, but war.

The Prime Minister recognized what few countries and very few experts recognized, which is that, in itself, resolution 1441 allowed the United States, for example, to go to war against Iraq.

When he said, “No, Canada will not support it, because this war seeks a regime change”, I heartily applauded him. He said, “No, Canada will not support it”. However, this question of regime change has not only been around for a few days or since the Prime Minister's visit to Mexico. It has been around, for those who follow current events, for a very long time.

Of course, the Security Council did not talk about a regime change because this is not permitted under international law. So, yes, we appreciated it when the Prime Minister said that Canada would not be taking part in this war. However, it must be said that, until the last second, he could have gone either way.

We cannot help but think of such things as the very large demonstrations that took place in Quebec City and Montreal. There has never been such a large one in Montreal except at the time of the failure of Meech Lake. That takes us back, but other than that one there has never been such an outpouring of public opinion.

No doubt the Prime Minister has also taken the time to see where public opinion was headed. We cannot forget that an election campaign was going on in Quebec. We know that the highest percentage of people opposed to the war in Iraq and the situation in Iraq was in Quebec.

●(1350)

The Prime Minister goes on in his second point to refer to the:

—unbreakable bonds of values, family, friendship and mutual respect that will always characterize Canada's relationship with the United States of America and the United Kingdom;

Of course we share this sentiment. It is important to remind the Americans that what we are opposed to is the decision taken by the American administration. It is important to differentiate between the

two. All colleagues must differentiate between the American people and the American administration.

In this connection, I would like to add one thing. Quebeckers and all Canadians are strongly in support of the war against terrorism, which is why they have grave doubts about the effectiveness of this war the U.S. administration has decided to wage on Iraq. Who can believe that the world is safer today than it would have been if we had continued the peaceful disarmament the UN and the UN inspectors were facilitating? Who can say that we, or the Americans, are any safer today?

The images that we are seeing—and especially those that we are not seeing, but that we will learn about in the coming weeks and months—will fuel the anger and the desire to exact vengeance felt by so many young and not so young Arab people, Muslim Arabs who will want to exact vengeance.

This is an extremely important issue. We have said it before; nothing justifies terrorism; however, it cannot be said that nothing fuels it. We believe—and no one can take away the legitimacy of this belief—that the war in Iraq will poison the region and serve to fan the flames of terrorism.

The motion refers to:

our pride in the work of the members of the Canadian Forces who are deployed in the Persian Gulf region—.

Obviously, these soldiers are in our thoughts. However, we cannot help but be concerned when the Prime Minister says that our troops cannot be sent into combat based on principle, when 31 people, maybe more, are in combat, even though the Prime Minister has said that it is an unjustified conflict. How are we supposed to reconcile these two ideas?

In closing, I would like to say that the reconstruction of Iraq must be carried out under the UN banner for the reasons I have just mentioned. It is important to show that what we are working for is justice for the people of Iraq and not profits for some state. We must not impose a model that would not come from the people of Iraq themselves.

We have seen in Afghanistan that democracy cannot be imposed, because combatants are taking up arms again, which can be dangerous. Kabul is not even close to being safe; only certain neighbourhoods are. The human rights, freedom and justice that we would like to see prevail are only just starting to take hold.

●(1355)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I am sorry to have to interrupt the hon. member for Mercier, but she will have another five minutes for questions and comments after oral question period.

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STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

CANADA CUSTOMS AND REVENUE AGENCY

Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton West—Mississauga, Lib.): Madam Speaker, at the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, we are committed to providing fairness to our clients and to protecting their rights through our policies.

Fairness provisions give the CCRA common sense ways to help clients who, because of extraordinary circumstances, are unable to meet their tax or duty obligations. The provisions give us the discretion in certain situations to cancel and waive penalties and interest; except late-filed, amended or revoked income tax elections; and issue income tax refunds beyond the normal three year period.

Extraordinary circumstances include situations such as serious illness or accident; serious emotional or mental distress; a disaster, such as a flood or a fire; an error in a CCRA publication; or financial hardship. Clients may make a fairness request to their tax services office for tax related matters, or to customs offices for customs related matters. Clients can learn more about their rights and obligations by consulting CCRA publications—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The hon. member for Vancouver Island North.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, the recent appearance of SARS in China, and its rapid spread and deadly consequences remind us that the global community must deal collectively with communicable diseases.

Taiwan is closely linked to both China and Canada. Taiwan is currently excluded from the World Health Organization membership due to objections from mainland China. Membership applications will be dealt with in May in Geneva at the 2003 annual meeting. United Nations membership is not a requirement for WHO membership and the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate both support Taiwan's application.

Last week, the foreign affairs committee of the House of Commons endorsed Taiwan's application for observer status to the World Health Organization. Canada should display conviction and international leadership by supporting Taiwan's application to the World Health Organization.

* * *

●(1400)

PARNELL SCHOOL

Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to take this occasion to congratulate Parnell School in my riding of St. Catharines on its 50th anniversary.

Parnell is more than a school, it is a former Grantham township family name, the title of four buildings that have been schools for children for more than 150 years. The first school was built in the 1850s on United Empire Loyalist land. The second school had to be

demolished to make way for the third Welland canal. The third schoolhouse was built in 1875 on land purchased from Sydney Parnell and at that time the school was given his name.

In the spring of 1951 a new school was proposed due to rapid growth in the immediate area. The first full school year at the new Parnell School was 1952-53. The present Parnell School is a junior kindergarten to grade six school with 363 students. It is a community-oriented school with a strong sense of family and a school where parents, teachers and students have mutual respect for one another.

I wish to congratulate Parnell School and may it continue to be a great example of what a great community school can be.

* * *

TERESA BOSELLI

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Ottawa Centre, I am saddened by the news that one of this city's leading restaurateurs, Mrs. Teresa Boselli, passed away last week at the age of 88.

Mamma Teresa Ristorante became a landmark in downtown Ottawa when Giuliano Boselli named the restaurant after his mother in 1970. Teresa Boselli and her husband Riccardo came to Canada from Italy in 1957 with their three children, Remo, Anna and Giuliano. After more than 30 years of business, Mamma Teresa's became a successful and favourite fixture in the capital of Canada.

Her family and friends will miss her gentleness and joyous personality. I would like to offer, on behalf of all my colleagues, our sincere condolences to the family and friends of Teresa Boselli.

* * *

AVRIL LAVIGNE

Mr. Larry McCormick (Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the opportunity to join the chorus of voices celebrating the biggest night of the year in Canadian music. Over the weekend, a young constituent of mine received well deserved recognition. Just back from a European tour where she gave rave performances to audiences in Amsterdam, Paris, Birmingham, Manchester and Glasgow, Avril Lavigne wowed us in Ottawa.

Not only did Avril sing *Losing Grip* to the crowd at the Corel Centre and to those like me who were watching from home, but she also received four Junos, earning best album of the year for *Let Go*, her first album; best single for *Complicated*; best new artist; and best new pop album.

On Saturday, I had the honour of joining Avril in our Prime Minister's office where he recognized her million-sale CD with a diamond award, and where they exchanged experiences of skateboarding and school challenges. This gracious young woman thanked her parents, her sister and brother. She warms our hearts with her authentic ways. She is Napanee's most celebrated artist. Her friends and neighbours congratulate Avril on her Juno success.

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We look forward to many more such celebrations. I would like to wish Avril all the best now and in the future.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, Lisa Dillman's worst fear came true last week when her lawyer said her ex-husband, John Schneeberger, was re-applying to force his two daughters to visit him in prison. This felon was convicted of drugging and raping two females, one of them his 13 year old stepdaughter, and obstructing justice for seven years by inserting another man's blood vial in his arm in order to thwart DNA tests.

I was there two years ago when Schneeberger forced Lisa and her daughters to visit him at the Bowden Institution. I will never forget the terror and horror I saw in those little girls' eyes. An RCMP officer on duty said to me with tears in his eyes, "I have kids at home. I can't believe our justice system is torturing two little girls like this".

Yesterday, the minister said that Bill C-22 would prevent this. That is just not the case. I plead with the minister to make the necessary amendments now.

* * *

[*Translation*]

RIGHT HON. PRIME MINISTER

Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister is celebrating today the 40th anniversary of his first election to the House of Commons, and I would like to mention some of the highlights of his career.

First, we all know the importance, for the environment, of ratifying the Kyoto protocol. The Africa plan, the antipersonnel land mines treaty and the international criminal court are recognized by our partners around the world. Children, aboriginals, and seniors benefit from the measures introduced by the government of this Prime Minister. Last but not least, national unity has been reinforced during the mandate of our Prime Minister.

I invite my colleagues to join me in congratulating our Prime Minister for his unparalleled dedication to our country and to Canadians.

* * *

●(1405)

YOUTH AND PEACE

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Madam Speaker, while bombs continue to spread terror, calls for peace continue unabated.

I met with young people from the Horizon Soleil elementary school in my riding of Laurentides; they asked me to give the Prime Minister their letters and drawings for him.

In one of these letters, a boy in grade three wrote, "I might have a small suggestion for ending the war: shake hands, make up and share".

Another young person spoke from the heart, "End the war because the children are afraid; we want everyone to get along".

Then, there is this poem:

It is important to us
If we want to be happy
To live in harmony
Because for peace
War must cease.

To all the Ariels, Kevins, Justines, Samuels, Marie-Èves, Melissas, Jean-Sébastien and all the others too, you are children of the earth, you are children of peace. May your spontaneous wisdom light our way.

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[*English*]

RIGHT HON. PRIME MINISTER

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after 40 years of public life, it is fitting today to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the election—when he was 29 years old—of the right hon. member for Saint-Maurice.

His list of achievements is long. As a backbencher he proposed a change in name from Trans-Canada Airlines to Air Canada and the adoption of Canada's flag, the maple leaf. As a minister in the Pearson and Trudeau cabinets he advanced the cause of Canada's pension plan, medicare, official bilingualism, national parks, and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

As Prime Minister for a decade, his government has supported the United Nations, multilateralism, the Kyoto protocol, the International Criminal Court and given leadership in health, education, research, innovation, aid to Africa and referendum law at home. He has led trade delegations to Asia and Europe to reduce Canada's economic dependence on the United States. Finally, his stand on Iraq has ensured that Canada is not involved in an unwanted war.

I would like to congratulate the right hon. member for Saint-Maurice.

* * *

GERALD EMMETT CARTER

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the death of a great Canadian, His Eminence Emmett Cardinal Carter.

He was raised in humble circumstances, the son of an Irish family from NDG in Montreal. The strong faith that he developed at an early age led him to dedicate his life to God and to God's people. His skill and intelligence led him to high office in the Catholic church, first as Bishop of London and then Cardinal Archbishop of Toronto, the de facto primate of English Canada. From that post he successfully achieved the promise of Confederation for Ontario's Catholic minority so that parents of modest means no longer had to pay tuition to educate their children in their faith.

Cardinal Carter exemplified a clear understanding of the right role of religion in public life, demonstrating that principles of faith can have a leavening effect in public discourse. He was a champion of the disadvantaged and the underdog, and a relentless advocate of the sanctity of human life. Most of all, he would want to be remembered for what mattered most to him: that for all of his magnificence and high office he was a priest in the humble service of his God. Requiescat in pacem.

* * *

[Translation]

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

The Speaker: For the benefit of the hon. members, I have the honour to lay upon the table the report of the Auditor General of Canada for the year 2003.

[English]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(e), this document is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

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[Translation]

RIGHT HON. PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Prime Minister's election as the member for Shawinigan. On April 8, 1963, the voters in that riding made an excellent choice. With his determination and dedication, this young man was destined for great things.

In fact, the "little guy from Shawinigan" has done great things for Canada. Quietly, he made his mark on the Liberal Party, worked his way up the government ladder, and has held the office of Prime Minister for 10 years.

Right from his first election, the Prime Minister has demonstrated that for Quebecers, the opportunities within Canada are unlimited.

Today, I want to congratulate the Prime Minister on the path he has chosen and the work he has accomplished.

Congratulations, long life, and thank you.

* * *

● (1410)

[English]

IRAQ

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the defence minister told the media that to know how the NDP was anti-American, they would have to use their imagination. I ask the media and the minister to imagine this.

Imagine a Canada that takes the principled position against an unjust war, a war which contravenes international law, instead of a waffling position based on trade and polling.

Imagine having a Minister of National Defence who believes that not participating in a war means not having ships or troops working

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in the combat zone and not providing our troops to other countries to free up combat troops for the invasion.

Imagine a Canadian cabinet that has a clear principled position on war, one that listens to its MPs and Parliament and is respectful of other points of view.

Imagine no Liberal doublespeak. Sadly, it is not easy if we try.

* * *

[Translation]

ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE DE QUÉBEC

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Orchestre symphonique de Québec, which celebrated its 100th birthday in October 2002, now enjoys outstanding renown under the direction of its esteemed conductor, Yoav Talmi. The internationally acclaimed conductor says that the orchestra's current cross-Canada tour is an extraordinary moment.

Mr. Talmi was quoted in the newspaper *Le Soleil* as saying:

As ambassadors for Quebec, we have a message to deliver. We have the opportunity to travel to Canada's major cities and show the excellence of the Orchestre symphonique de Québec. Since my arrival four years ago, the orchestra has never been in better form than it is today.

Tonight, the orchestra will give a concert in Ottawa and the Bloc Québécois wants to pay homage to the orchestra's leadership, conductor Yoav Talmi, managing director Michel Létourneau and all the musicians who have made this orchestra a leading cultural instrument for Quebec.

On this day in particular, I salute them.

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[English]

RIGHT HON. PRIME MINISTER

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud today to congratulate the Prime Minister on the 40th anniversary of his first election to the House of Commons.

Forty years ago today, a young man arrived on Parliament Hill from Shawinigan, Quebec, a newly elected member of Parliament, full of ideals and hope. The little guy from Shawinigan has since occupied more cabinet posts and has served longer in cabinet than any other Canadian. As Prime Minister he has become one of the world's most respected leaders.

During his time we have seen the country become more united and more prosperous because of the leadership and inspiration he has given us. But he has given us something that cannot be measured: his love of this country, his passion and caring for the land and its people.

Not only has the Prime Minister led this government to three consecutive majority governments, but he is leaving his party in a position to govern for years to come, a rare success in Canadian politics.

I ask the House to join me in offering our heartfelt congratulations to the Prime Minister of Canada.

*Oral Questions***FISHERIES**

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, over the weekend thousands of dead codfish washed ashore in Friendly Bay, Newfoundland. This is one of the few remaining stocks of cod in Atlantic Canada.

Scientists have theorized that the fish swam into a body of supercooled water. Fish have been swimming in the Newfoundland waters for centuries, we have known for 500 years. We have never known them to be suicidal and unlike the Liberals, they are not kamikazes.

We have a problem. We have too few scientists and we have too many seals.

The minister is just about to make some important decisions in this matter. I hope he makes the right ones because he could correct both of these problems.

* * *

TOURISM

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise in the House to bring attention to the significant impact the tourism industry has on the Canadian economy.

Last year tourism spending totalled more than \$54 billion. Thanks to more than \$16 billion of foreign spending, tourism is Canada's fourth largest export industry. The tourism industry employs more than 580,000 Canadians directly. In fact from a government perspective, the tourism industry produces an estimated revenue of almost \$17 billion in taxes, of which more than \$9 billion goes to the federal government.

Today the Tourism Industry Association of Canada is hosting its annual Talking Tourism Symposium with tourism representatives from coast to coast to coast coming to Ottawa to discuss this dynamic industry.

As a member of Parliament from P.E.I. where tourism is one of our most important industries, I would like to welcome Don Cudmore, executive director of the Tourism Industry Association of P.E.I., and the other representatives of the tourism sector to Ottawa. I encourage them to keep up their great work.

* * *

● (1415)

HOMELESS

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton Centre-East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, a cold chill exists on Parliament Hill, a cold chill from the office of the minister of the homeless.

Four years ago homeless counts in Edmonton showed emergency shelters as full and overflowing. Four years and \$20 million of federal homeless funding later, exactly 12 shelter beds were added, even though the homeless counts were up 60%.

Homeless emergency shelter planning was so abysmal that they did not provide the most basic of human needs, a few square feet of warm shelter floor space to sleep on. Two people died on the streets of Edmonton this winter. Seven hundred and fifty-three million

dollars has been spent nationally but the homeless still die on Canada's streets because of a lack of permanent basic shelter space.

Shame on a minister who has failed so miserably. Shame on a Liberal government that obviously does not care. The true cold chill on Parliament Hill is in the hearts of those in the Liberal government.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

IRAQ

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the foreign affairs minister was unable to say if the government opposes regime change in Iraq, so today I will try the Prime Minister. Two weeks ago the Prime Minister said, "The question of changing regime is not a policy that is acceptable".

Is the government still opposed to regime change in Iraq?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I said and I will repeat that the notion that there will be a change of regime as an international policy we think is not a policy that is acceptable. Of course in the circumstances that we have in Iraq at this moment, it is obvious that the result will bring about a change of regime.

The goal was to disarm Saddam Hussein. That was the goal that was accepted in resolution 1441. There was not another resolution. That is why we did not participate. It is the basis for the Americans and the British to claim that they can do what they are doing at this time. That will necessarily result in a change of regime.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I was hoping the Prime Minister would celebrate his 40th anniversary with a clear answer. He seemed to be both for and against regime change in that answer.

Let me put it this way. The Liberal motion before us today, the Prime Minister's own motion, calls for the allies to be successful in their mission. Their mission is regime change in Iraq.

Does the government support a successful regime change in Iraq or not at this point?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just explained very clearly that it is evident the result of the present conflict will bring about a change of regime. We want this war to finish quickly with a minimum of victims. We feel strongly about the American, Australian and British families who have daughters and sons there. I hope that a minimum of them will lose their lives.

The result of this war, as I said, will bring about a change of regime, but a policy of going around the world to change regimes is something that I am not about to accept.

Oral Questions

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in fairness to the Prime Minister, those sentiments on a coalition victory, he could have figured those out the first day of the conflict.

Let me pursue this a little bit. Saddam's regime could be toppled within days. The government has not to this point been in support of the concept of regime change. That is what the Prime Minister said today. Does this mean the government will withhold recognition of a post-Saddam government?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the first day of the war or the second day, I said that I wanted, and we wanted, the Americans and the British to succeed. That is what we said in the House right at the beginning, even if we are not there for the reasons that I have given very clearly this morning. This has been the position of the government.

If there is another government, we will decide as we do with every change of regime that occurs around the world. We decide what we will do after there is a change of government.

• (1420)

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we are listening carefully to what the Prime Minister is saying and maybe that is our mistake.

We know that most people want the hostilities to end. We know that the Liberals feel strongly about it because he lets his MPs use very strong language about the Americans. He said he is opposed to someone going around the world changing regimes. We know that.

We are asking very clearly. His motion says he hopes the allies are successful. They are changing the regime. Are you supporting the change of Saddam's regime—

The Speaker: The hon. member knows he must address his question to the Chair. I know he will in the supplementary.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, they keep repeating the same question. If the member had listened he would know the position I gave to his leader a minute ago.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we are going to give him another chance.

This is the dying days of the regime. It is a malignant regime. The odious creatures of this regime are being removed. Iraqis are actually celebrating in the streets their freedom that is coming toward them.

Does the Prime Minister support the allied mission to finally remove Saddam Hussein's regime, yes or no?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, they want me to say that we accepted this as a policy.

I want him to know, for example, that at this moment I am not supporting Mugabe in Zimbabwe. There are a lot of people that I think should not be there. I do not think that it is, for example, the role of Canada as one of the senior members of the Commonwealth to change a regime in Zimbabwe. If we start that, where do we stop?

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, to prevent excessive unilateralism, international institutions, above all the United Nations, must play a key role that can

absolutely not be ignored, before, during and after a war. The coalition went to Iraq without the approval of the UN. The United States want not only to lead reconstruction in Iraq, but also to try Iraqi criminals in its own courts.

Will Canada register a protest with the Bush administration and ask that Iraqi war criminals be tried by an international criminal tribunal?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, with respect to the hon. member's assertion that the Americans have decided to act completely unilaterally, if he read the dispatches a few minutes ago, he will know that the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Great Britain both said that the United Nations were to play a major role in what is to come in Iraq.

Based on this statement, we will see what happens. I think that as we speak, the Secretary General of the United Nations is on his way to meet with European leaders to try to reach a consensus to help ensure proper management of the post-war situation.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what the clarifications provided around lunchtime mean is that they will leave humanitarian assistance to the UN, but that reconstruction contracts will go to friends of the government, both in the U.S. and in Great Britain. That is what we are condemning.

Regarding war criminals—and that is what my question was about—if the Milosevic trial has any credibility, it is because he is being tried by an international criminal tribunal.

My question to the Prime Minister is the following. With respect to the specific topic of Iraqi war criminals, will Canada demand that they be tried by an international criminal tribunal, and not a strictly American or British led tribunal?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at this time, the secretary general is discussing with the British, the Americans, the Europeans as well as our officials to determine what system should be put in place after the war. It is premature to conclude that it will be one rather than another.

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this morning the Prime Minister solemnly told us that the serious decision to send troops into combat must not be made out of economic considerations or friendship, but for reasons of principle.

Why did the Prime Minister not use those same rules for the Canadian soldiers who are in combat zones in Iraq?

• (1425)

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is true, as the hon. member suggests, that making such decisions is sometimes a very solemn and very difficult matter. The government has, however, stated on a number of occasions that our alliances with our partners are crucial. The government has decided to honour those agreements. The government unreservedly supports our men and women who are in the region.

Oral Questions

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how many soldiers can be sent into combat before the Prime Minister's principles apply? How many soldiers can be sent into combat for reasons of economics or friendship in an unjustified war?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the last thing the government would do, as the Prime Minister has said, would be to send men and women to war for economic reasons. We have not done so, nor will we ever. This is the position of the government, as the Prime Minister explained very clearly this morning.

[English]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Prime Minister. I listened carefully to his answer to a previous question about whether Iraqi war criminals would be tried in the United States or by an international trade tribunal, and the Prime Minister said that he did not know what would happen.

We do not want to know from the Prime Minister what he thinks will happen. We want to know from the Prime Minister what he thinks should happen. We want to know what principle is informing the Canadian government position on this.

Could he tell us, does he believe that these war criminals should be tried by the United States in the United States or by an international tribunal?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course there is no question of trading anything there. He talked about a trade tribunal but I do not think it is that.

We said that at this moment the Secretary of the United Nations is in communication with everyone on that issue. We do not know exactly, the war is not over. They are all speculating about what would happen after that. It is very important that all the bridges be built among the different nations at this time.

The last few months have been very difficult for the international community and we have to build bridges between Europe and America, among all the nations of the world, that would be beneficial to everyone.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said that the government's position on the war is informed by a principle, the principle of United Nations having to sanction a war in Iraq. That did not happen. The government did not participate.

I am asking the Prime Minister this. Why is his position about what happens after the war not informed by the same principle, that any trial of Iraqi war criminals be conducted in the context of an international tribunal and not by the United States alone? It seems to me it is the same principle.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are laws on that and there are international conventions on that. I hope everybody will follow the international conventions post-war.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister tells us what Kofi Annan is doing. He tells us what Tony Blair is doing. Then he says that we will sit back and wait to see what happens.

The Prime Minister knows there is a major difference between humanitarian aid and reconstruction. He knows Tony Blair and other European leaders are making concrete positive proposals about the UN role.

What specifically is Canada proposing to give the United Nations the authority to play a leading role in the reconstruction of post-war Iraq?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working on that with our ambassador to the United Nations. I have had the occasion to talk with some of the leaders about what will happen, both in terms of humanitarian aid and reconstruction. I have made many telephone calls on it.

I had a chance to talk with Mr. Blair and we discussed exactly that. We were in agreement that there should be an important role for the UN in the reconstruction of Iraq.

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MEMBER FOR LASALLE—ÉMARD

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has a personal duty to ensure that his ministers are not in conflict of interest. The Prime Minister's ethics counsellor sat in on the secret meetings between the former minister of finance and the shipping company the former minister owns.

On April 2 I asked the Prime Minister whether he had asked the ethics counsellor whether the then finance minister discussed his company's move to Barbados. The Prime Minister said, "I have not been informed". That was six days ago.

Has the Prime Minister informed himself now and will he give us his word, categorically, that the member for LaSalle—Émard was not in conflict of interest.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when somebody is in the cabinet for nine years, we cannot know exactly at what meeting he was in or out of a cabinet meeting. I said that the former minister of finance was an honourable man and he knew what his duty was. On many occasions, he abstained himself from discussions, but I cannot on every file know if he was there or not.

I think the former minister of finance said clearly that he followed all the rules. I have no reason not to believe what he said.

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●(1430)

CANADA CUSTOMS AND REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, today's Auditor General's report singles out the government's failure to take corrective action following a report done on the effectiveness of Canada customs officers in maintaining security at our border. The Auditor General has blamed the government for having no co-ordinated security policy at our border.

Why will the government not take border security seriously and shift the priority for customs from revenue collection to primarily protecting Canadians?

Oral Questions

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the role that customs officers play on the primary line at all Canada's ports of entry. We also are really pleased to say that we have signed a memorandum of understanding with citizenship and immigration.

We have taken the Auditor General's recommendations and already begun to implement them to ensure that we better monitor the effectiveness so that we and all Canadians can be assured that Canada customs is doing the job. All Canadians should be proud of them.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, for 10 years the government has done nothing. The government has failed in protecting Canadians and our customs agents. It has failed in providing adequate training and in giving them proper resources.

The minister obviously does not take her job seriously. In fact she has gone as far as calling customs agents glorified bank tellers.

When will the minister finally take her job seriously and give customs agents the power, the respect and the responsibility to protect this country?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I challenge the member opposite to table in the House any place where I ever said what he just attributed to me. That is absolutely false, and he knows it.

I take very seriously what the Auditor General has to say. I met with her earlier this week. I am very proud of the work that Canada customs officers do. CCRA is a very important partner in border security, as well as facilitation.

I take the criticism by the hon. member for what it is, a cheap shot.

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[*Translation*]

IRAQ

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when asked last week about the use of cluster bombs in Iraq, the Prime Minister replied that cluster bombs were not prohibited by the landmines treaty.

Should the Prime Minister not reiterate to the United States our strong opposition to the use of these bombs that cause so many deaths, even after the end of a war, as was the case for some 4,000 civilians killed after the first gulf war?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I already said, Canada does not use these bombs. Our policy regarding these bombs is reviewed every year.

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the bombs that are scattered about after a cluster bomb explodes are yellow, the exact same colour as food rations that are being distributed to the people affected by war. Children often confuse the shells scattered by the explosion of cluster bombs with emergency rations. How can such weapons be tolerated?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has already indicated that Canada has

made an effort to eliminate these bombs internationally. Unfortunately, we were not successful, but we did try.

[*English*]

We have nothing to apologize for, as I said to the NDP last week. We have done our best on this issue. We put it before the international court of opinion. We did not win but we made every effort we could to deal with the issue.

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IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, today after seeing the Auditor General's latest report, we now know why the immigration minister has not bothered to remove Ernst Zundel from our country. It turns out that he is completely asleep at the switch when it comes to kicking the bad apples out of Canada. In fact in the last six years the number of illegals here has increased by a whopping 36,000 people.

Could the minister tell Canadians how many of these are a threat to our security?

• (1435)

Hon. Denis Coderre (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I take good note of the Auditor General's report. As a matter of fact, and I want to emphasize what the Minister of National Revenue just mentioned, not only is security our top priority but we have the memorandum of understanding that proves the government is doing things instead of calling people names.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I guess the minister does not agree with the Auditor General because she has discovered that nearly half of those in Quebec facing deportation have gone into hiding and their status is unknown.

What assurance can the minister give that this huge problem is not even greater across Canada? How many illegals are hiding in our country? Does the minister know what he is doing?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am always very worried when the Canadian Alliance talks about Quebec. We all recall the party's constant Quebec bashing during election campaigns.

One thing is sure, though; not only am I pleased to see that the Auditor General has given us the tools needed to work, but we have not stopped there. In addition to investing additional money for immigration control officers, we have also signed a safe third country agreement with the United States. We signed a MOU with my colleague from National Revenue to ensure that we are indeed effective on the ground. A balance between vigilance and—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Joliette.

*Oral Questions***TAXATION**

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, all parties in the National Assembly agree and recognize that the needs are in Quebec while the money is in Ottawa. In this context, it is impossible to reduce income taxes any more without putting service to the public at risk.

Is the federal government finally going to recognize the existence of a fiscal imbalance and agree to discussions in good faith, in order to arrive at an equitable sharing of resources with Quebec and the other provinces?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government's position on the subject of the alleged fiscal imbalance is well known. It has not changed and it is very clear.

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the proof that a fiscal imbalance exists is that, as soon as Ottawa gave back part of the money it had cut from health care, the Government of Quebec was able to relieve the pressure on the system.

Does the government recognize that the fiscal imbalance must be addressed in order for Quebec and the provinces to have more money available for the health and education of their residents?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am certain that the hon. member is very happy with the 2003 budget, in which we have provided a great deal of money to all the provinces, including the province of Quebec. The government's position on the alleged fiscal imbalance remains the same.

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[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General said today that the housing crisis on our reserves continues to escalate beyond control. Our first nation Canadians are living in third world conditions, and the government does not seem to care. They need 8,500 new homes now.

When can these Canadians expect the government to deliver on its obligations and get them out of their squalid living conditions and into decent housing?

Hon. Robert Nault (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is fair to say that the policy dealing with housing on reserves is intended to create a market process to allow first nations to enter into a market and to have mortgages like other Canadians. I do not think it is suggested that the policy is intended to produce a house paid for by the Government of Canada for every first nation family. That is not the direction of the government. The new policy that was put in place in 1996 was intended to do just that, to move toward market conditions.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the government is going to leave our first nation Canadians right out in the cold because it only intends to deliver 2,700 houses this year. That is 6,000 houses short and it leaves 6,000 families with no place to live this winter and next winter.

What will the minister do other than tell them to go out and get a mortgage when they do not even have a job?

Hon. Robert Nault (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is our housing policy is a subsidy to first nations based on a per capita. The amount of \$137 million a year is transferred to first nations governments that have responsibility for housing. It is the plan of the government, working with first nations communities, to develop strategies so they can be homeowners like all other Canadians.

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• (1440)

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with the very recent passage of Bill C-227, starting tomorrow every April 9 will be known as Vimy Ridge Day in Canada and on that day the Peace Tower flag will fly at half-mast.

Could the Minister of Veterans Affairs tell the House the importance of remembrance in Canadian society and how Vimy Ridge Day can help to promote Canada's military and peacekeeping legacy?

Hon. Rey Pagtakhan (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Science, Research and Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first let me congratulate the member for Algoma—Manitoulin for introducing the bill in the House. I thank all parliamentarians in both Houses for giving the bill speedy passage into law.

The battle of Vimy Ridge was a pivotal point in our nation's history, earning young Canada at the time, a place on the international stage. By giving an enduring tribute to our heroic Canadians who fought in the service of their country, and who died 86 years ago in the distant past, we continue to give the message to members of the present forces that we will continue to remember them as they continue to serve their country.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. He should know that when it comes to housing on first nations communities, we are not talking about market forces. We are talking about human rights and decent living conditions. We want the government to take some action once and for all.

The Auditor General today has said that there is a housing crisis among first nations communities and unless action is taken quickly, already unacceptable housing conditions will only get worse.

After a decade in power, after the royal commission on aboriginal people, after people getting sick from contaminated mould in their houses, when will the government finally do something?

Oral Questions

Hon. Robert Nault (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that since 1991 on reserve units have increased by 70%. The government has been moving on delivering programs and services and the kind of financial resources necessary to subsidize housing on reserves.

Is the member suggesting that it is the responsibility of the Government of Canada to produce a house for every first nation family? I do not think so. Our role is to deliver the kinds of policies and programs that allow first nations to have their own housing based on their own abilities to—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Windsor—St. Clair.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's report indicates that the Department of National Defence does not have a comprehensive list of contaminated sites. It warns that some of the unaccounted for contaminants may pose serious health risks to our military personnel.

The cost of conducting these site assessments would be about \$9 million but only \$500,000 per year has been allocated, meaning it will take 18 years before we find out how bad the situation is.

Is the Minister of National Defence satisfied with that allocation that provides nothing for cleanup and requires our personnel to wait 18 years before they find out if they are working on contaminated sites?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Department of National Defence takes its environmental responsibilities extremely seriously. Indeed, in the current year we are projecting to spend \$100 million on the environment. We really are putting our money where our mouth is.

With respect to contaminated sites, my department allocated close to \$70 million over the past year for the assessment, cleanup and ongoing management of these sites.

We understand that work remains to be done but we are fully committed to getting on with that work.

* * *

MEMBER FOR LASALLE—ÉMARD

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

The Auditor General stated today that when it comes to combating money laundering “funds have been moved through companies involved in international trade”.

She further stated “‘know your customer’ is a basic part of a system to fight money laundering”.

When CSL struck a deal that involved Suharto's son, was the then minister of finance, the member for LaSalle—Émard, briefed by CSL or his officials on the potential for his business deal to involve money laundering on the part of Suharto's son or of a corrupt regime?

The Speaker: I do not believe that question falls within the administrative responsibility of the government. The hon. member for South Shore may want to ask another question as a supplementary.

* * *

● (1445)

AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Mr. Speaker, today, in the Auditor General's 2003 annual report, she indicated that her office was facing a \$1 million shortfall.

Two years ago the member for Calgary Centre mentioned in the House:

There are several ways to muzzle the watchdogs of parliament. One way is to deny...adequate funding to the auditor general...

Will the Prime Minister indicate to the House whether the Auditor General will be receiving additional resources in order to keep up with the audits on programs such as the failed long gun registry?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have always funded the Auditor General adequately. If there are some problems there is a process to ask for new funds.

We used to have only one report a year. We are the government that proposed and passed legislation to authorize four reports a year. Nobody can say that we do not want the Auditor General to do her work. We proved that we were more open than any other government when we gave the authority for four reports a year.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Barbados tax avoidance scheme benefited the former finance minister and his corporation, CSL. He promised to close that loophole but did not.

Will the government today close the loophole that continues to benefit CSL, the former finance minister and his family?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have no idea how any particular provision might benefit a particular company. I would be interested in knowing how the hon. member knows that.

As I explained last week in the House, the provisions are pursuant to a tax treaty between Canada and Barbados. We generally do not suspend the application of a tax treaty unilaterally. Some of these issues are on the table, between Canada and Barbados, in discussions in which we are now engaged.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that this tax loophole could be changed with six months' notice unilaterally. Maybe that is the reason the former finance minister will not appear on programs on CTV to answer these questions.

Oral Questions

At the start of his tenure it cost the Canadian taxpayer \$4 million. At the end of his tenure it cost \$1.5 billion and Canadian taxpayers had to make up the difference.

Again, why does the government not close the tax loophole now?

Hon. John Manley (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many submissions have been received on this, including those from companies that believe this is an appropriate provision to exempt tax paid surplus that is earned in a foreign affiliate located in a treaty country from being further taxed when its returned to Canada.

I think, rather than personalizing his views, the hon. member might want to take the time to look at the tax policy behind it and then give us his considered opinion whether the changes he is advocating ought to be made.

* * *

[Translation]

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Odina Desrochers (Lotbinière—L'Érable, BQ): Mr. Speaker, imported butter oil and sugar blends are increasingly taking the place of Canadian milk in certain dairy products. This has resulted in a loss of some \$30 million annually for Quebec and Canadian milk producers.

What is keeping the Minister of National Revenue from taking action to control these imports in the same way as he has such products as milk, butter, cheese and yoghurt?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, this is a matter on which we have worked hard since the caucus meeting last August.

The four ministers involved have addressed the matter, and we have determined, acting on recommendations from departmental staff, that the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and myself should reflect on the matter and gauge the potential legal impacts of any decision.

Our recommendations, once determined, will be made known shortly, directly to the dairy producers.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, those may be fine words, but in the meantime tonnes of butter oil-sugar blend have been imported into Canada without any tariff control between 1998 and 2003. Moreover, there was a 557% jump in these imports between 1995 and 2001.

How can the Canadian government dare to say that it is negotiating an agreement with the United States in order to control these imports, while the bulk of the dairy substitutes are coming from New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Mexico?

•(1450)

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have just said, this butter oil issue is precisely one of those we have been looking into.

The United States is not the only one involved. Obviously, some of the product comes from New Zealand and some from other countries. But it is covered by a tariff line negotiated at the time. We

have already gone before the international tribunal with this, and lost, a few years ago.

We are currently reviewing our options. We have been given some recommendations and are looking at them at the present time. We shall be adopting one of the recommendations shortly.

* * *

[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Blackstrap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, immigration officers are present at only 44 of 272 staffed ports of entry. In light of terrorist threats, the question is, who is getting through the other 228 ports of entry?

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a memorandum of understanding with the revenue department. We are working together. Authority is delegated by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to the people at Canada Customs. We are working together.

I must stress that our goal is to achieve a balance between vigilance and openness. And on both counts, we are doing a fine job.

[English]

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Blackstrap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, new arrivals are waved through, directed to immigration offices and expected to show up on the honour system. I do not think Canadians believe the honour system is the best approach to national security.

Why has the Liberal government failed to protect our border by not staffing 84% of our ports of entry with immigration officers?

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our department is working hand in hand with the revenue department to ensure that we can indeed have a policy of consistency and efficiency and that both departments can protect Canadian citizens, that is, new arrivals and those welcoming them.

* * *

[English]

FISHERIES

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the management of last year's Fraser River sockeye salmon fishery in British Columbia drew a lot of public criticism, especially from the commercial fishing sector. Many felt they had lost fishing opportunities during what was a run of record abundance.

Last September the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans initiated a post-season review of the 2002 salmon fishery which resulted in a report involving all industry stakeholders.

Will the minister please inform the House about this report and his response to it.

Hon. Robert Thibault (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I first would like to thank all the people who served on that review. They did an excellent job. It has been unprecedented that we have had co-operation from all sectors in British Columbia: first nations government, environmental organizations, and commercial and recreational fishers.

I am pleased to announce that I am accepting all 14 recommendations in their report which will lead to a much better managed fishery. I look forward to continuing to work with them in the future.

* * *

FIREARMS REGISTRY

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the justice minister's Plans and Priorities report confirm that the firearms program will cost more than a billion dollars by 2005. However, in an unprecedented move, the minister tabled his estimates report with 105 blanks, so no one can tell how much it will really cost.

In December the Auditor General told the government to stop keeping Parliament in the dark.

Why is the minister's report to Parliament filled with blanks rather than facts and figures?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should do his homework. On the government side we did our work. First, we have accepted all the recommendations of the Auditor General's report. Second, we have asked for a few studies as well in order to move forward with a good plan of action and with the supplementary B estimates that have been tabled in the House for about \$59 million. For next year we are talking about \$113 million.

Having said that, the numbers have been established based on Mr. Hession's report. The hon. member should read Mr. Hession's report in order to know the exact calculation that we have used.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, that is no answer.

Why are all those spaces blank with the costs unreported? We do not know what it will cost. If Mr. Hession's report was so valuable why is there not some reflection of that in the bill that is now before Parliament, Bill C-10A?

These amendments to the gun registry, which were tabled yesterday and debated yesterday, have been kicking around this House for more than two years.

Why does the minister not just admit that there are no amendments that can fix the firearms registry? Why not just scrap it?

• (1455)

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very simple. As I have said, this government has a very good plan of action. The estimates are quite clear. He should read, as a member, the report of Mr. Hession. We based our calculation on Mr. Hession's report.

Oral Questions

Having said that, it is a strong policy and a good policy for Canadians that we support and Canadians support.

However those members do not support it and will never support gun control because when they read in a press release that gun control will result in more crime, more injuries and more deaths, they cannot support a good policy. They will never do that.

* * *

[Translation]

FISHERIES

Mr. Ghislain Fournier (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on the Lower North Shore, ice conditions will prevent fishing boats from going out for another month, thus depriving fishers of their income. That is why they have been demonstrating for eight days, awaiting a positive response from Fisheries and Oceans Canada to their request for a special program.

Does the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans intend to grant these fishers who are the victims of a situation beyond their control a special allowance like the one in the early 1990s?

Hon. Robert Thibault (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will soon be announcing management measures for the current year concerning fisheries for several species. As we know, there are species at risk, and difficult decisions will have to be made. Both the minister responsible for the Canada Economic Development Agency and the minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency are preparing to provide a solution to help communities in need, if required.

* * *

[English]

GOVERNMENT ONLINE SERVICES

Mr. Tony Valeri (Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the recent Accenture report recognized Canada as a global leader in e-government.

Over the past year consultations have been held across the country to discuss the future of e-government with stakeholders.

Given our progress to date, there is broad agreement that we have an opportunity to help establish competitive advantages in the knowledge economy and strengthen our democracy. Sure, there are challenges going forward; there is a need to develop new models of accountability; how to treat information as a public resource; and encouraging political leadership.

Could the President of the Treasury Board tell the House what the government intends to do to meet these challenges and ensure that Canada continues to be a world leader in e-government?

Tributes

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the House that we want to continue our strategy of government online. For the third year in a row Canada is first among 22 countries for its strategy of government online. It is because we place citizens and businesses at the core of our strategy and we consider that in a wider approach for transforming services across all departments and levels of government.

I would like pay tribute to the members for Stoney Creek and Winnipeg South for following that file closely and showing interest. This will deliver better services to all Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADA CUSTOMS AND REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue.

Several truckers from my riding are complaining that drivers who have the misfortune to prefer being served in French at the Thousand Islands and Windsor border crossings on their return to Canada get stuck for hours before anyone deigns to look after them.

Can the minister tell us if she intends to intervene with Canada Customs and Revenue Agency officials to put a stop to this?

[English]

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for the question. This is the first time that I have been made aware of that complaint.

We are committed at CCRA to ensuring that the official language policy is not only alive and well, but that all those clients who wish to have contact with the agency are able to do so in either of the official languages. I will look into the complaint. If the member were to have any details, I would ask him to give them to me. They would be helpful as I review this matter.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Stratford recreation and agricultural complex needs a Canada infrastructure grant, but therein lies the problem. The Prime Minister waited six months to call a byelection and the good folks of Perth—Middlesex have not had an MP to assist them. The Liberal candidate has been absolutely no help.

Will the minister responsible for infrastructure ensure that this application is brought forward as quickly as possible or will his government hold up this deal for ransom?

● (1500)

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in fact, Brian Innes has been in touch with us about the needs of the community. We will respond, of course, as we have throughout Ontario with the infrastructure program, ensuring that the needs of communities throughout Canada are met and that the Government of Canada is there to provide the infrastructure necessary to make Canada ready for success in the 21st century.

JUSTICE

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, under section 195(1) of the Criminal Code the Solicitor General has the responsibility, by law, to table before Parliament every year the use of electronic surveillance that is happening in Canada. Both this Solicitor General and the former solicitor general have failed to do this since 2000. My question is, why?

Hon. Wayne Easter (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the previous solicitor general and myself live up to our obligations, and these matters are being worked on.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Janez Susnik, President of the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

RIGHT HON. PRIME MINISTER

The Speaker: Pursuant to the order made yesterday, I call upon the hon. member for Hamilton West.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and privilege to rise on behalf of the national Liberal caucus to join in the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the election of a member of the House, a man whose love of country is unparalleled, a respected world leader, the right hon. member for Saint-Maurice, the Prime Minister.

[Translation]

Today, we are celebrating the political career of a man who won the hearts of his constituents of Mauricie 11 times. We are paying tribute to a man who has devoted his entire life to serving the people of Canada, a man who has been in charge of all the major federal departments, a man who has been a member of cabinet longer than anyone else in Canadian history.

[English]

We celebrate the work of a Prime Minister who has supervised Canada's return to a firm financial footing, who brought about a resurgence in the vitality and vigour of our economy, who allowed us to renew and modernize our social policies, and who renewed the confidence of Canadians in the future of their country.

Above all, we celebrate a Canadian of immense skill, wisdom and vision, whose no-nonsense style and down to earth approach has time and time again rallied the Canadian people and our caucus to meet and overcome truly immense challenges. The skeptics got it wrong. We were up to and accomplished the tasks.

Tributes

It is a phenomenal record to be sure, which has been rewarded with the ultimate compliment of the people of Canada: three straight majority governments.

However, dwelling on his record for too long would miss the point that his career teaches all of us, which is that the key to earning the confidence of the Canadian people can and must be found not in savouring a glorious past but in preparing for a brighter future.

Indeed, today the Prime Minister will be travelling to an event where university leaders will pay tribute to his immense contribution in an area that is fundamental to a brighter, more prosperous Canadian future: massive investments in science, research and development. Consistent with the Prime Minister's approach to almost every task he has set out for our government, this has come about without a lot of fanfare or headlines. It has been done quietly, step by step, out of an abiding conviction that it was simply the right thing to do, and the right thing for the future.

As we celebrate this special day, I would like to depart for a moment from parliamentary decorum and address the Prime Minister directly on behalf of our caucus. Your confidence is contagious, your integrity secure. You have the love of, and from, family. That is obvious and endearing. We still have a lot of work to do together and your caucus will be with you doing that job together.

Happy 40th anniversary, Mr. Prime Minister.

• (1505)

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, as the member of my caucus who celebrated his 30th anniversary of being elected to the House I get the honour of saying a few words about the Prime Minister.

Today we salute a long and distinguished career in Canadian politics. The right hon. gentleman from Saint-Maurice celebrates the 40th anniversary of his first election to the House. We join all hon. members in offering our congratulations for a career that has spanned five decades commencing on this day in 1963 when he became the hon. member for Saint-Maurice—Lafleche.

We were colleagues in the House, although on the opposite side of the chamber during the early 1970s. We had many personal contacts and many good political debates.

In 1987 my friends and supporters organized a fundraising roast for me. They thought that the little guy from Shawinigan would be a great roaster, so they invited him. He was a man of great stature at the time and was the featured speaker at my roast. The evening drew more than 1,200 paying guests and raised the largest amount of any political fundraiser at that time in British Columbia's history.

I should add by comparison that the then Liberal leader, John Turner, drew only 600 paying guests the night before and did not raise nearly as much money. Perhaps he should have called on the little guy from Shawinigan for help.

Perhaps after the Prime Minister retires to Shawinigan to play golf he will invite me to his riding for a golf tournament. We could make a personal wager on every hole and we could donate that money to a charity of his choice in Shawinigan.

It has been a truly remarkable career. He has seen seven prime ministers come and go during this time. In fact, it can be said he helped some of them go. For the record, here are the names of the prime ministers who have served Canada since the right hon. gentleman first got involved in politics: Diefenbaker, Pearson, Trudeau, the right hon. member for Calgary Centre, Turner, Mulroney and Campbell.

Perhaps the Prime Minister should reconsider his decision to retire. His friend Jacques Chirac is running again and he is 70 years of age right now. There is another reason why he should contemplate seeking the leadership of his party once again. There is no Quebec-born candidate for the leadership for the first time in living memory in Canada. If he were to seek the leadership as a favourite son candidate from Quebec, he would undoubtedly clobber the competition.

The Prime Minister need only serve one term and then retire. The member for LaSalle—Émard could continue campaigning and recruiting delegates until that final retirement. And when and if the party chooses the member for LaSalle—Émard as leader, he will not be any older than the Prime Minister is now.

Louis St. Laurent did it. Jacques Chirac is going to do it. Ronald Reagan managed to hang in there. Why does the Prime Minister not change his mind? It will give the member for LaSalle—Émard time to develop his own red book, even though by that time he will be referred to as the really ancient mariner.

Seriously, we are here to acknowledge and congratulate the Prime Minister on reaching this milestone. He did not win his first election and subsequent elections all on his own. He had the loving support of a devoted partner and family. While we pay tribute to the right hon. gentleman on this 40th anniversary, we also acknowledge the tremendous contribution that is made by those we call our partners. The Prime Minister has often paid tribute to Aline and we congratulate her as well for her contribution to Canada.

We have had differences of opinion in this place and we will continue to have differences of opinion. Harsh accusations are hurled across this floor and returned with equal velocity. But at this one moment in time in the House of Commons, I think it appropriate to offer nothing but best wishes on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Prime Minister's first election.

On behalf of my colleagues, I wish to congratulate both him and his charming wife Aline, his children and grandchildren.

• (1510)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, people often say that lasting is what counts in politics. And the Prime Minister can say that he has lasted a long time. Some might say too long, but I know he would take that as a compliment.

You can understand that for a sovereignist, paying tribute to this Prime Minister gets a little complicated. However, while the Prime Minister's political life has been marked in large part by his fight against sovereignists, he has also helped us because he has been very consistent in his opposition to us, which in turn has forced us to be consistent, too.

Tributes

After 40 years in political life, he still has not managed to get rid of us, and I must say that we have no intention of disappearing any time soon. However, I would not want him to misinterpret me. I am not provoking him, or challenging him to stick around in politics for another term, because he certainly deserves some rest.

We have our differences, the Prime Minister and I, profound differences when it comes to the future of Quebec. That does not prevent me from appreciating him for the man he is. I went with him to ground zero, for example, and I think I can say that we both shared a very intense emotional experience together.

So I congratulate him for his 40 years in Parliament, as Prime Minister since 1993. I wish him a good end of term, even though we will do everything we can to annoy him. Finally, I wish him a good life upon retiring from politics, together with his wife Aline, who has stood by his side all these years.

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Prime Minister. He was first elected 40 years ago today, when he defeated a Social Credit candidate in a riding in the Mauricie region.

[English]

We would have to say that 40 years in politics is really quite a milestone. I first met the Prime Minister back in 1968. I am not sure if he will remember. We were running some kind of a mini-marathon outside the House of Commons. I remember that he fell on his head. He had a big bump on his head.

An hon. member: It wouldn't be the first time.

Hon. Lorne Nystrom: I do not know whether that explains things or not, but that is when I first met the future Prime Minister of Canada.

I really got to know him very well when he became minister of justice and I was the NDP constitutional critic in 1980 during the patriation of the Constitution. That is when I got to know him and Eddie Goldenberg, of course, very well.

I can say that the Prime Minister is someone who as a politician was really underrated by many people in the country. I remember back in 1989-90 when he was called yesterday's man. Of course that was proven wrong by the people of this country, three times since that day.

He has a good sense of the country. He has a very good, folksy sense of humour. He can be very partisan. He can be very political. He can also be very personal and very friendly on the personal side.

The Prime Minister and I belong to a very special club in the House of Commons: We are the only two MPs in the House of Commons to have been sued by Conrad Black. I remember the day after it happened. My phone rang and it was the Prime Minister on the phone to commiserate. He can be very personal.

He is also very straightforward and very direct and sometimes, I would say, a little bit of a one man show. I did some research the other day and I found a comment by the Prime Minister from a press conference in 1989 which summarizes his style, a style I hear about time and time again from Liberal backbenchers. He said:

One of the moments that gave me the greatest pleasure was flying over the beautiful fjords... on Baffin Island. I was like a kid. I'd been there a few times before and had to tell everybody on the plane, "Look, look, you have to see this." I sat down next to my wife and I said, "You love it, eh?" She said it was beautiful. I said, "I will make it a national park for you."

On Monday I went to my office and I consulted with the Minister of Indian Affairs, who was me. Then I consulted with the Minister of Northern Affairs, who was me. I then consulted with the Minister of Parks, who was me. And I took my pen, signed an agreement, and created a national park.

Liberal MPs, including the member from Sarnia and the member for LaSalle—Émard, tell me that the Prime Minister is a bit more democratic than he was in those days.

Sometimes it is confusing to know where he stands. He has his unique way of saying things. It is confusing not only for the opposition, but also confusing for his Liberal colleagues.

● (1515)

[Translation]

He was elected member of Parliament 12 times, and Prime Minister of Canada three times. He was the Deputy Prime Minister of our country. He served as a minister 10 times. He was the Leader of the Opposition. He served as parliamentary secretary twice.

[English]

I say in conclusion that I could not help but notice on the weekend that the Prime Minister is interested in a new career. I saw photos of him with the rocker Avril Lavigne. The rumour I hear from the Langevin Block is that he is soon going to be teaming up with his old friend Herb Gray. They are going to create a brand new band called "The Granddaddies of Rock and Roll".

[Translation]

Congratulations to the Prime Minister of Canada, to his wife Aline and to his family on his 40 years as a member of Parliament in Canada.

[English]

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, I never knew the real Mackenzie King, so I cannot judge whether the current Prime Minister is a reincarnation. They both communed famously with people who were not there. Both moved forward sideways and then denied having moved at all.

● (1520)

[Translation]

On political issues of the utmost importance, both expressed themselves in a completely incomprehensible fashion. The current Prime Minister—what an improvement—can be equally incomprehensible in both official languages. One might even wonder if he is not speaking some new official language of his own.

[English]

Among the Prime Minister's contributions is the fact that in the election of 1972 I would never have got here without him. He was, as my colleague for Qu'Appelle reminded us, the minister responsible for national parks where, among other things, no local government was allowed.

Tributes

He came to Jasper to meet a throng of citizens outraged by his policies and he told them, "If you don't like things here, there is a road going east, and a road going west". Some in the House will be familiar with that diplomatic style.

Certainly it helped me to take the road to Ottawa, defeating a very good Liberal and a friend of the Prime Minister, Allen Sulatycky, who now, miraculously, and on his merit, is associate Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta. In Alberta at least, the Prime Minister appoints good judges.

These 40 year tributes are unusual. There was one for Mr. Diefenbaker, who had served 39 years, 6 months and 19 days, but he had to die first. There was one for Herb Gray, who had served 39 years, 6 months and 26 days, but he had to leave first.

[*Translation*]

In tributes it is customary to point out good deeds. I will therefore not recall recent events today. As parliamentarians and as Canadians, the Prime Minister and I have profound differences of opinion. And, of course, in all instances, the Prime Minister is wrong.

[*English*]

What I do want to recall today is the member for Saint-Maurice who fought and spoke with passion for his province as part of his country, the minister who, in those early days at least, was the most approachable in cabinet, and most of all, the political competitor who rarely quits and is shrewd and tough and dangerous in the corners.

The Liberal Party has no idea what it is losing.

The Prime Minister has been here longer than the eternal flame, but he is still a relative newcomer in a Parliament that is sitting now in its third century.

This chamber has seen the patricians and the trailblazers, the steady and the eccentric, and in the likes of Macdonald and Laurier, and Diefenbaker and Tommy Douglas and Trudeau, the occasional sparks of brilliance.

But the real promise of our democracy, in this land where wealth and privilege are not supposed to be decisive, the true accomplishment is to be simultaneously the Prime Minister and le petit gars de Shawinigan.

My party and I congratulate the Prime Minister on his longevity, and Aline for her forbearance.

• (1525)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: On this very special parliamentary occasion, I shall recognize the Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very moved by this tribute from the House of Commons for my years of service since 1963.

[*English*]

It is a big family, as can be seen with all the tributes that have been mentioned today.

I was reading a book about Churchill a few days ago written by Lord Jenkins. He never voted against his party; he just changed parties. He said that it was no use to vote against the party, that it was better to change. He was very competitive, like some of us can be. When it was over, he was fighting even within his own party with very strong views. He felt, according to the book, that he had not offended anyone, that when it was in parliament it was in parliament and when it was outside parliament, it was outside parliament. It is a bit like playing hockey as a friendly group; we bump each other but when it is over, we go and have a beer together.

This is the House of Commons. We have a lot of different strong views. We express them very strongly and sometimes emotions are high. Something we learn is that for everyone who tries to come here it is because they want to make a contribution to the nation. They want to represent their own area in this nation and it creates a great atmosphere.

This institution, the House of Commons, is one of the most fabulous that exists. It is a test every day for every one of us because if we get up and we miss, we look pretty bad. All these guys are watching and now the television is on us.

It is probably only in Canada that the Prime Minister has to be in the House of Commons three or four times a week to reply to questions. For me, this room has virtually become my living room. I know that in 2004 I will have to dispense with it. I will miss the friendship and the brotherhood that exist in this room. It is a great privilege to have served this country for so long. We live in a very great country in that we can have days like today.

When I was elected 40 years ago, I was not nervous, I was sure of winning. My wife was sure we would win. The morning after, we realized that we were the only two in the riding who were sure that we would win, because the Socred had won nine months before with a huge majority, and I used to say just the time to get burned with defeat. We managed to make it and I have no regrets. Every day has been an enrichment for me.

[*Translation*]

I have learned something every day. I have seen my country change. I see these people with very different opinions and very strong beliefs about programs and the country's future, but who voice them openly.

Sometimes, when people say more than they mean, they frequently truly regret what they said. At times, when I participated in debates with members, we would meet in the halls or elsewhere and apologize or congratulate one another. Sometimes, even I, when someone would give it to me good, would say, "Well done; it will be your turn next week". This is the House of Commons.

In my opinion, 40 years of service is something very significant. I have had an influence on the lives of certain people, particularly the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, who has been in this House a long time. Before he became leader, he did not know whether to run for the leadership or not. I told him, "There is one thing, Joe, that I am absolutely sure of. If you don't run, you won't win". So he did.

Government Orders

Afterward, I congratulated him and said “My dear friend, you won \$50 for me”. The leader of the Progressive Conservative Party replied, “Thanks for the congratulations, and for the good advice you gave me, but maybe part of that \$50 should be mine”. So I gave him \$5 and said, “The advice I gave you, my dear friend, was for the good of the Liberals, not the Conservatives”.

I must take advantage of this opportunity to thank Aline and my family. If the wife of a man who has been in politics for 40 years has not earned a place in heaven, then I most certainly am not going. I also want to thank the people of Saint-Maurice for their vote of confidence in me in 11 elections, and the people of Beauséjour, New Brunswick, for their warmth toward me for the few years I was there.

All in all, I have had a wonderful career. When I leave in early 2004, I will have the satisfaction of having done my utmost to serve this country. I will certainly miss you all because this has been my life. But one has to know when to leave. I am sure that the 21st century will be a very good one for all Canadians, and we will continue to set an example for the rest of the world.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1530)

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2003

The House resumed from April 2 consideration of the motion that Bill C-28, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 18, 2003, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the motion that this question be now put.

The Speaker: It being 3:34 p.m., pursuant to order made on Wednesday, April 2, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the previous question at the second reading stage of Bill C-28.

Call in the members.

● (1540)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 139*)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allard	Anderson (Victoria)
Assadourian	Augustine
Bagnell	Bakopanos
Barnes (London West)	Beaumier
Bélair	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bennett
Bevilacqua	Binet
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Boudria	Bradshaw
Brown	Bryden
Byrne	Caccia
Calder	Caplan
Carignan	Carroll
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Chrétien

Coderre	Cotler
Cullen	Cuzner
DeVillers	Dhaliwai
Dion	Dromisky
Drouin	Duplain
Easter	Efford
Eggleton	Eyking
Farrah	Finlay
Folco	Frulla
Fry	Godfrey
Goodale	Graham
Grose	Harb
Harvard	Harvey
Hubbard	Ianno
Jackson	Jennings
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Karygiannis	Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Laliberte
Lastewka	LeBlanc
Lee	Leung
Lincoln	Longfield
MacAulay	Mahoney
Malhi	Manley
Marci	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews	McCallum
McCormick	McGuire
McLellan	McTeague
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)	Minna
Mitchell	Murphy
Myers	Nault
Neville	Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	Owen
Pacetti	Pagtakhan
Patry	Péric
Pettigrew	Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pillitteri
Pratt	Proulx
Provenzano	Redman
Reed (Halton)	Regan
Robillard	Rock
Saada	Savoy
Scherrer	Sgro
Simard	St-Jacques
St-Julien	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibault (West Nova)	Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tirabassi	Tonks
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Wappel
Whelan	Wilfert
Wood — 139	

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bailey
Bergeron
Blaikie
Bourgeois
Casson
Clark
Crête
Davies
Desjarlais
Duceppe
Elley
Fitzpatrick
Fournier
Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier
Godin
Gouk
Grey
Guimond
Harris
Herron
Hill (Macleod)
Hinton
Johnston

Government Orders

Keddy (South Shore)
Laframboise
Lancôt
Loubier
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Masse
McDonough
Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)
Nystrom
Pankiw
Penson
Proctor
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Roy
Schmidt
Solberg
Spencer
Stinson
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Venne
Wayne
Williams

Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lalonde
Lill
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Mayfield
Ménard
Merrifield
Moore
Obhrai
Paquette
Picard (Drummond)
Rajotte
Reynolds
Rocheleau
Sauvageau
Skelton
Sorenson
St-Hilaire
Strahl
Vellacott
Wasylycia-Leis
White (North Vancouver)
Yelich — 102

Drouin
Easter
Eggleton
Farrah
Folco
Fry
Goodale
Grose
Harvard
Hubbard
Jackson
Jordan
Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
Lastewka
Lee
Lincoln
MacAulay
Malhi
Marcil
Matthews
McCormick
McLellan
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
Neville
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Pacetti
Patry
Pettigrew
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Saada
Scherrer
Simard
St-Julien
Steckle
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Ur
Vanclief
Whelan
Wood — 139

Duplain
Efford
Eyking
Finlay
Frulla
Godfrey
Graham
Harb
Harvey
Ianno
Jennings
Karetak-Lindell
Keyes
Knutson
Laliberte
LeBlanc
Leung
Longfield
Mahoney
Manley
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McGuire
McTeague
Minna
Murphy
Nault
Normand
Owen
Pagtakhan
Péric
Phinney
Pillitteri
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Rock
Savoy
Sgro
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Stewart
Telegdi
Thibault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Valeri
Wappel
Wilfert

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Bonwick
Cardin
Gagnon (Champlain)
Macklin
McCormick
Peterson
Speller

Bertrand
Bulte
Fontana
Gaudet
Marceau
Perron
Plamondon
Tremblay — 16

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

The question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find consent in the House that the vote taken on the previous motion be applied to the vote now before the House.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 140)

YEAS

Members

Adams
Allard
Assadourian
Bagnell
Barnes (London West)
Bélaïr
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blondin-Andrew
Boudria
Brown
Byrne
Calder
Carignan
Castonguay
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Coderre
Cullen
DeVillers
Dion

Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bélangier
Bennett
Binet
Bonin
Bradshaw
Bryden
Caccia
Caplan
Carroll
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chrétien
Cotler
Cuzner
Dhaliwal
Dromisky

Abbott
Anders
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Benoit
Bigras
Borotsik
Breitkreuz
Chatters
Comartin
Dalphond-Guiral
Day
Desrochers
Duncan
Epp
Forseth
Gagnon (Québec)
Gallant
Girard-Bujold
Goldring
Grewal
Guay
Harper
Hearn
Hill (Macleod)
Hilstrom
Jaffier
Keddy (South Shore)
Laframboise
Lancôt
Loubier

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bailey
Bergeron
Blaikie
Bourgeois
Casson
Clark
Crête
Davies
Desjarlais
Duceppe
Elley
Fitzpatrick
Fournier
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Gauthier
Godin
Gouk
Grey
Guimond
Harris
Herron
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hinton
Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lalonde
Lill
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)

Government Orders

Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
 Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
 Masse
 McDonough
 Meredith
 Mills (Red Deer)
 Nystrom
 Pankiw
 Penson
 Proctor
 Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
 Ritz
 Roy
 Schmidt
 Solberg
 Spencer
 Stinson
 Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
 Venne
 Wayne
 Williams

MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
 Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
 Mayfield
 Ménard
 Merrifield
 Moore
 Obhrai
 Paquette
 Picard (Drummond)
 Rajotte
 Reynolds
 Rocheleau
 Sauvageau
 Skelton
 Sorenson
 St-Hilaire
 Strahl
 Vellacott
 Wasylcia-Leis
 White (North Vancouver)
 Yelich — 102

Bevilacqua
 Blondin-Andrew
 Boudria
 Brown
 Byrne
 Calder
 Carignan
 Castonguay
 Cauchon
 Charbonneau
 Coderre
 Cullen
 DeVillers
 Dion
 Drouin
 Easter
 Eggleton
 Farrah
 Folco
 Fry
 Goodale
 Grose
 Harvard
 Hubbard
 Jackson
 Jordan
 Karygiannis
 Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
 Kraft Sloan
 Lastewka
 Lee
 Lincoln
 MacAulay
 Malhi
 Marcl
 Matthews
 McCormick
 McLellan
 Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
 Mitchell
 Myers
 Neville
 O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
 Pacetti
 Patry
 Pettigrew
 Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
 Pratt
 Provenzano
 Reed (Halton)
 Robillard
 Saada
 Scherrer
 Simard
 St-Julien
 Steckle
 Szabo
 Thibault (West Nova)
 Tirabassi
 Ur
 Vanclief
 Whelan
 Wood — 139

Binet
 Bonin
 Bradshaw
 Bryden
 Caccia
 Caplan
 Carroll
 Catterall
 Chamberlain
 Chrétien
 Cotler
 Cuzner
 Dhaliwal
 Dromisky
 Duplain
 Efford
 Eyking
 Finlay
 Frulla
 Godfrey
 Graham
 Harb
 Harvey
 Ianno
 Jennings
 Karetak-Lindell
 Keys
 Knutson
 Laliberte
 LeBlanc
 Leung
 Longfield
 Mahoney
 Manley
 Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
 McCallum
 McGuire
 McTeague
 Minna
 Murphy
 Nault
 Normand
 Owen
 Pagtakhan
 Péric
 Phinney
 Pillitteri
 Proulx
 Redman
 Regan
 Rock
 Savoy
 Sgro
 St-Jacques
 St. Denis
 Stewart
 Telegdi
 Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
 Tons
 Valeri
 Wappel
 Wilfert

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
 Bonwick
 Cardin
 Gagnon (Champlain)
 Macklin
 McCormick
 Peterson
 Speller

Bertrand
 Bulte
 Fontana
 Gaudet
 Marceau
 Perron
 Plamondon
 Tremblay — 16

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Finance.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

SEX OFFENDER INFORMATION REGISTRATION ACT

The House resumed from April 2 consideration of the motion that Bill C-23, An Act respecting the registration of information relating to sex offenders, to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the motion that the question be now put.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the previous question at the second reading stage of Bill C-23.

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find consent in the House that the vote on the previous motion be applied to the vote on the motion now before the House.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 141)

YEAS

Members

Adams
 Allard
 Assadourian
 Bagnell
 Barnes (London West)
 Bélair
 Bellemare

Alcock
 Anderson (Victoria)
 Augustine
 Bakopanos
 Beaumier
 Bélanger
 Bennett

Abbott
 Anders
 Bachand (Saint-Jean)
 Benoit
 Bigras
 Borotsik
 Breikreuz
 Chatters
 Comartin
 Dalphond-Guiral
 Day
 Desrochers
 Duncan
 Epp
 Forseth
 Gagnon (Québec)

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy
 Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
 Bailey
 Bergeron
 Blaikie
 Bourgeois
 Casson
 Clark
 Crête
 Davies
 Desjarlais
 Duceppe
 Elley
 Fitzpatrick
 Fournier
 Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)

Government Orders

Gallant
Girard-Bujold
Goldring
Grewal
Guay
Harper
Hearn
Hill (Macleod)
Hilstrom
Jaffer
Keddy (South Shore)
Laframboise
Lancôt
Loubier
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Masse
McDonough
Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)
Nystrom
Pankiw
Penson
Proctor
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Roy
Schmidt
Solberg
Spencer
Stinson
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Venne
Wayne
Williams

Gauthier
Godin
Gouk
Grey
Guimond
Harris
Herron
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hinton
Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lalonde
Lill
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Mayfield
Ménard
Merrifield
Moore
Obhrai
Paquette
Picard (Drummond)
Rajotte
Reynolds
Rocheleau
Sauvageau
Skelton
Sorenson
St-Hilaire
Strahl
Vellacott
Wasylycia-Leis
White (North Vancouver)
Yelich — 102

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Bonwick
Cardin
Gagnon (Champlain)
Macklin
McCormick
Peterson
Speller

Bertrand
Bulte
Fontana
Gaudet
Marceau
Perron
Plamondon
Tremblay — 16

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

The question therefore is on the main motion.

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find consent in the House that those who voted on the previous motion be recorded as voting on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting yes.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this way?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

• (1545)

Mr. Dale Johnston: Mr. Speaker, Canadian Alliance members will be voting no to this motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Québécois support this motion.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, the members of the NDP vote yes on this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Conservative Party will vote yes to this motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Guy Carignan: Mr. Speaker, I vote yes on this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Pankiw: No, Mr. Speaker.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pierrette Venne: Mr. Speaker, I vote yes on this motion.

[*English*]

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 142*)

YEAS

Members

Adams
Allard
Assadourian
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bélanger
Bennett
Bevilacqua
Binet
Blondin-Andrew
Borotsik
Bourgeois
Brown
Byrne
Calder
Carignan
Castonguay
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Clark
Comartin
Crête
Cuzner
Davies
Desrochers
Dhaliwal
Dromisky
Duceppe
Easter
Eggleton
Farrah
Folco
Frulla
Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier
Godfrey
Goodale
Grose
Guimond
Harvard
Hearn
Hubbard
Jackson
Jordan
Karygiannis
Keyes
Knutson
Laframboise
Lalonde
Lastewka
Lee
Lill
Longfield
MacAulay
Mahoney
Manley
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Masse
McCallum
McDonough

Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine
Bagnell
Barnes (London West)
Bélair
Bellemare
Bergeron
Bigras
Blaikie
Bonin
Boudria
Bradshaw
Bryden
Caccia
Caplan
Carroll
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chrétien
Coderre
Cotler
Cullen
Dalphond-Guiral
Desjarlais
DeVillers
Dion
Drouin
Duplain
Efford
Eyking
Finlay
Fournier
Fry
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Girard-Bujold
Godin
Graham
Guay
Harb
Harvey
Herron
Ianno
Jennings
Karetak-Lindell
Keddy (South Shore)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
Laliberte
Lancôt
LeBlanc
Leung
Lincoln
Loubier
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Malhi
Marcil
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Matthews
McCormick
McGuire

Supply

McLellan
Ménard
Minna
Murphy
Nault
Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Pacetti
Paquette
Péric
Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Rocheleau
Roy
Sauvageau
Scherrer
Simard
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Stewart
Telegdi
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tirabassi
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wayne
Wilfert

McTeague
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
Neville
Nystrom
Owen
Pagtakhan
Patry
Pettigrew
Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri
Proctor
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Rock
Saada
Savoy
Sgro
St-Hilaire
St-Julien
Steckle
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tonks
Valeri
Venne
Wasylycia-Leis
Whelan
Wood— 186

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Anders
Bailey
Breitkreuz
Chatters
Duncan
Epp
Forseth
Goldring
Grewal
Harper
Hill (Macleod)
Hilstrom
Jaffer
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Mayfield
Merrifield
Moore
Pankiw
Rajotte
Reynolds
Schmidt
Solberg
Spencer
Strahl
White (North Vancouver)
Yelich— 55

Ablonczy
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Benoit
Casson
Day
Elley
Fitzpatrick
Gallant
Gouk
Grey
Harris
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hinton
Johnston
Lunn (Saanic—Gulf Islands)
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)
Obhrai
Penson
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Skelton
Sorenson
Stinson
Vellacott
Williams

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Bonwick
Cardin
Gagnon (Champlain)
Macklin
McCormick
Peterson
Speller

Bertrand
Bulte
Fontana
Gaudet
Marceau
Perron
Plamondon
Tremblay— 16

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—SITUATION IN IRAQ

The House resumed from April 3 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion relating to the business of supply.

• (1555)

(The House divided on the motion, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 143)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Anders
Bailey
Borotsik
Casson
Clark
Duncan
Epp
Forseth
Goldring
Grewal
Harper
Hearn
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom
Jaffer
Keddy (South Shore)
Lunn (Saanic—Gulf Islands)
MacKay (Pietou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mayfield
Merrifield
Moore
Pankiw
Rajotte
Reynolds
Schmidt
Solberg
Spencer
Strahl
Vellacott
Wayne
Williams

Ablonczy
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Benoit
Breitkreuz
Chatters
Day
Elley
Fitzpatrick
Gallant
Gouk
Grey
Harris
Herron
Hill (Macleod)
Hinton
Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)
Obhrai
Penson
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Skelton
Sorenson
Stinson
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Venne
White (North Vancouver)
Yelich— 64

NAYS

Members

Adams
Allard
Assadourian
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bellemare
Bergeron
Bigras
Blaikie
Bonin
Bourgeois
Brown
Byrne
Calder
Carignan
Castonguay
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Coderre
Crête
Dalphond-Guiral
Desjarlais
DeVillers
Dion

Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine
Bagnell
Barnes (London West)
Bélangier
Bennett
Bevilacqua
Binet
Blondin-Andrew
Boudria
Bradshaw
Bryden
Caccia
Caplan
Carroll
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chrétien
Comartin
Cuzner
Davies
Desrochers
Dhaliwal
Dromisky

Drouin
Duplain
Eggleton
Farrah
Folco
Frulla
Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier
Godfrey
Goodale
Grose
Guimond
Harvard
Hubbard
Jackson
Karetak-Lindell
Keyes
Knutson
Laframboise
Lalonde
Lastewka
Lee
Lill
Loubier
Mahoney
Manley
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Masse
McCormick
McGuire
Ménard
Minna
Murphy
Nault
Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Pacetti
Paquette
Péric
Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Proulx
Reed (Halton)
Robillard
Rock
Saada
Savoy
Simard
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Stewart
Telegdi
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Valeri
Wappel
Whelan
Wood— 165

Duceppe
Easter
Eyking
Finlay
Fournier
Fry
Gagnon (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Girard-Bujold
Godin
Graham
Guay
Harb
Harvey
Ianno
Jennings
Karygiannis
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
Laliberte
Lancôt
LeBlanc
Leung
Lincoln
MacAulay
Malhi
Marcil
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McCallum
McDonough
McLellan
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
Neville
Nystrom
Owen
Pagtakhan
Patry
Pettigrew
Picard (Drummond)
Proctor
Redman
Regan
Rocheleau
Roy
Sauvageau
Scherrer
St-Hilaire
St-Julien
Steckle
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Ur
Vanclief
Wasylycia-Leis
Wilfert

PAIRED

Members

Asselin
Bonwick
Cardin
Gagnon (Champlain)
Macklin
McCormick
Peterson
Speller

Bertrand
Bulte
Fontana
Gaudet
Marceau
Perron
Plamondon
Tremblay— 16

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Mr. Roy Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you could please record me as voting against that motion.

The Speaker: Is there consent to permit the hon. member to have his vote recorded?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Points of Order

Mr. David Pratt: Mr. Speaker, I would like the record to show that I abstained from voting on this motion. While I could not in good conscience vote against the motion, neither could I support it.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Nepean—Carleton knows that we do not record abstentions in the House.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, during question period I was challenged by the Minister of National Revenue to produce the documents that attribute her with the comments of referring to customs agents as bank tellers. I have the documents and the articles here and I would like to table them if I have consent.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to permit the hon. member to table the documents?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, nowhere in any of those articles does it use the words "glorified bank tellers". Neither does it attribute to me that comment, other than the security concerns that we have about customs officers not placing themselves in any kind of jeopardy.

The Speaker: I would suggest that the hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona and the minister sit down and discuss the terms on which these things can be tabled and then come back to the House when the terms have been settled.

I think to get into debate on that on the floor would be pointless and indeed perhaps disruptive to order in the House.

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the member for Edmonton—Strathcona has asked permission of this House to table a document and I did not hear whether you had said that he had consent or he did not.

The Speaker: I understood he did not. The minister indicated in her point of order that she would consent under conditions. I suggested that the two meet to discuss the conditions and settle them rather than continue to debate them on the floor of the House because there was a fear that it was causing disorder, and we cannot have that.

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, in relation to a ruling you made today on the question asked by the member for South Shore, I respectfully ask that if you review the blues you may find that there was a question and that it might be in order.

The Speaker: I want to say to the hon. member for St. John's West that I received a note from one of his distinguished colleagues on this point. I have directed that a review of the blues be undertaken. I hope to be in a position to let the hon. member know in due course should I have made a blunder in the course of question period in my ruling. I will look into the matter. I thank him for drawing this to my attention.

Government Orders

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Because of the deferred recorded division government orders will be extended by 22 minutes.

* * *

• (1600)

SITUATION IN IRAQ

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Hon. Stephen Owen (Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Indian Affairs and Northern Development), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Kitchener—Waterloo.

At this challenging time of terrorism and war, we as Canadians are examining our principles and our relationship to the United States and to the world. It is important that we avoid simplistic notions of for or against, all right and all wrong, and once and for all. The issues are complex, the context shifts and global relationships are increasingly interdependent. Absolute positions can bring short term confidence, but they are brittle and confine us over time.

Canadians and Americans relate closely to each other on multiple levels: family, community, culture, economy, environment and security. Yet we often differ on attitudes to health care, gun control and capital punishment. Internationally, we have parted company on treaties relating to landmines, children's rights, climate change, war crimes tribunals and, most recently, the timing and conditions on action to disarm Iraq; not whether to disarm, but when and how.

The Canadian government decided that the invasion of Iraq was premature, the case of weapons of mass destruction and links to al-Qaeda not convincingly made, the requisite international support not assembled, the last resort of war not yet reached. Our attempt to build Security Council consensus through a further resolution with clear benchmarks, a set deadline, and the explicit consequences of armed invasion was unsuccessful. That the U.S. government came, on balance, to a different conclusion, does not affect our friendship but rather demonstrates our independence of thought and action.

Neither Canadians nor Americans are unanimous in their opinions. Some of America's most respected political thinkers agree with the Canadian decision: historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and Joseph Nye, the dean of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, for instance. Not having agreed with the invasion of Iraq at this time is not anti-American. However we must guard against our internal political debate becoming anti-Canadian.

Canada will continue to support a multilateral approach to complex global issues. This is consistent with our modern history and our mediation role that is respected internationally. Immediately for Iraq it means encouraging a UN mandate for humanitarian relief and reconstruction, and a Security Council resolution to establish an ad hoc war crimes tribunal to try Saddam Hussein and his barbarous regime.

More broadly, it requires fine tuning of Canadian foreign policy to closely align our diplomatic, defence, development and trade initiatives. Canada is a trusted international facilitator of dispute resolution. We are the acknowledged expert in peacekeeping. We are a respected contributor to humanitarian relief and development. We

also are successful global traders. This is a unique set of attributes. Budgets are being increased and mandates reviewed. We must integrate our policies for optimum effect.

We know that the security, prosperity and quality of life of Canadians are enhanced by the increased opportunities of those in other parts of the world. Coordinating our defence and peace initiatives with our aid to civilian populations caught in conflict, linking trade agreements to human rights, environmental and democratic guarantees, and offering our "good offices" to mediate conflicts together present a coherent, positive internationalist agenda.

Let us stand together in the House, of all places, for these proud traditions and future leadership.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I am a little surprised to hear that speech coming from a minister because I thought normally ministerial speeches were fact checked, were a little better informed.

He said, for instance, that the case about weapons of mass destruction had not been made. I infer from that, that he means the presence of stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Has he not read resolution 1441 where all 15 members of the UN Security Council agreed unanimously that Iraq was in material breach of its obligations to disarm and that 1441 asserted, with unanimous agreement, the continued illegal presence of weapons of mass destruction? Exactly what case had not been made, given that the case for Iraq's continued illegal possession of these weapons was unanimously concurred in by all members of the Security Council?

The member also said that he supports the creation of an ad hoc UN tribunal to try Saddam Hussein. I am glad to hear that since I have been pressing for that motion for five years. However he also said that he supports multilateralism. Is he not aware that two of the permanent members, France and Russia, have consistently threatened to exercise a veto to block the creation of an international ad hoc tribunal to try Saddam Hussein and his colleagues for crimes against humanity, and according to Human Rights Watch, because of their extensive commercial interests in Iraq?

If he is unwilling to see Canada support military action because of its threatened veto on the enforcement of 1441, then why is he prepared to support the creation of an international tribunal, notwithstanding a threatened veto from the very same countries?

• (1605)

Hon. Stephen Owen: Madam Speaker, the hon. member mixes up two important issues. The first one has to do with the inspections that were being undertaken under the leadership of Hans Blix to determine whether the disarmament order was or had been complied with. The other issue has to do with bringing the leader and his co-conspirators of this odious regime before a court of law to be tried for war crimes.

Government Orders

The inspection of course was underway. It was making progress. Inspector Hans Blix was reporting out on a regular basis to the United Nations Security Council. The serious consequences in 1441 had not yet been determined to have been required because the inspection was not finished.

The Canadian role was quite straightforward. As a matter of fact, the week before war was declared, the lead editorial in the *Los Angeles Times* supported by name the Canadian attempt to have a set deadline, clear benchmarks and the serious consequences spelled out in a further resolution. That was all underway and it was supported by many people. That was simply the timing that we felt should be set explicitly.

With respect to the war crimes tribunal, this is a matter of setting up an appropriate tribunal to try someone for serious crimes against humanity in a court of law, in accordance with rules of evidence and rights of accused, but in public before the whole world to ensure that justice is done and the many victims of this odious regime see some satisfaction through those criminals being brought to trial. That is something quite separate from the inspection regime that was underway, was working and Canada, in its wisdom and in its friendship with the United States, the friendship of positive criticism and advice, suggested that we go to a further resolution.

Unfortunately that was not followed but here we are together wishing our friends and allies, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, Godspeed in their efforts in Iraq.

Mr. Jason Kenney: Madam Speaker, the minister either misunderstood my question or deliberately evaded it. Let me make it clear.

Canada did not support the current military action because of a threatened French and Russian veto on the enforcement of 1441, but France and Russia have three times threatened a veto against the creation of an international tribunal to prosecute Saddam through the UN Security Council.

Why is their veto sufficient to block our desire of enforcement in one case but he still supports the creation of a international tribunal, notwithstanding France and Russia's veto? This is a critical issue about the functionality of international institutions which he claims to champion.

Hon. Stephen Owen: Madam Speaker, the hon. member confuses it again. Canada is not a member of the Security Council at this time. We are attempting, through our good offices, to encourage the members of the Security Council to put forward and support such a resolution.

●(1610)

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the decision not to get involved in the invasion of Iraq was a principled one that I support. We have been consistent in saying that Canadian involvement in a military action against Iraq could only take place as part of a multilateral force authorized by a resolution of the United Nations Security Council. This view is echoed in e-mails, letters and phone calls I have received from my constituents, and the resolution passed by the council of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo.

I am a strong supporter of our armed forces but decisions regarding what actions they take are ours to make. While I support the role that Canada is playing in the war on terrorism and understand the purpose of our military presence in the Persian gulf, I would have been happier if we were consistent and had no military personnel in the war zone.

I am disappointed with the Alliance, which very much like its neo-conservative American colleagues, supports this war. Its criticism of the government's position in a democratic debate in the House of Commons exceeds any criticism made against the war. Further, if Alliance members truly were concerned that critical comments could hurt Canada, they would not magnify that criticism. War with its heavy casualties, mostly of innocent civilians, evokes strong emotions. When innocent civilians are dying, we should be having a heated debate.

No one has any illusions about Saddam Hussein. He is a brutal dictator whose actions have kept his people in a state of terror, brought financial ruin and inflicted great suffering of his people and neighbouring countries. However much as I would like to see him ousted, I do not believe that this war at this time has a legal basis in international law. It also sets a dangerous precedent that other antagonistic countries that fear each other, such as Pakistan and India, might use to justify a pre-emptive action of their own with potentially catastrophic consequences for the whole world.

Only a UN resolution could sanction this action. It is unseemly that rather than waiting a few more weeks while Iraq was destroying rockets that have a range exceeding 100 miles, under the supervision of the United Nations weapons inspectors in accordance with the terms of UN resolution 1441, the U.S. and Britain chose to bypass the UN and launch a unilateral attack against Iraq.

The majority of UN members supported more time for weapons inspectors. As former President Jimmy Carter recently said in the *New York Times*:

The war can only be waged as a last resort, with all nonviolent options exhausted. In the case of Iraq, it is clear that alternatives to war exist.

Canada places great value in the United Nations and other international organizations. I am disappointed that the U.S. administration does not share this view and this is reflected in it not supporting initiatives such as the Kyoto accord, the international landmines treaty and the World Court. These are the proper venues for achieving a safe and peaceful world.

This war threatens to diminish these institutions. Under the leadership of President Bush, the U.S. government has come to believe that it is acting from a place of highest moral authority, without UN Security Council approval and ignoring the checks and balances that international institutions provide. They are leading us into a new world order dominated by a Pax Americana. They believe that America has the God-given right to be the lawmaker, judge and enforcer of world order.

Government Orders

The philosophy of the Bush doctrine was spawned by a group of neo-conservatives in Washington led by Richard Perle. In practice it extends the principles of the Munroe doctrine for U.S. hegemony in the western hemisphere to the whole world. The arrogance of the claim to have the right to unilaterally meddle in the internal affairs of sovereign countries is simply astounding.

I quote U.S. Senator Robert Byrd, the dean of the U.S. Congress, who said:

—today I weep for my country. I have watched the events of recent months with a heavy, heavy heart. No more is the image of America one of strong, yet benevolent peacekeeper. The image of America has changed. Around the globe, our friends mistrust us, our word is disputed, our intentions are questioned.

The signatories of the U.S. declaration of independence who founded a nation based on the principles of justice and freedom for all citizens would be turning in their graves to see how these principles have been taken hostage.

The U.S. has propped up dictatorial and corrupt regimes in Panama, Guatemala, Iraq, Iran, Vietnam and elsewhere. It has supported armed opposition groups like the Contras in Nicaragua and the Taliban in Afghanistan, caring neither about the political stripe nor the objectives of their allies, as long as they served American interests at that time.

•(1615)

America has been complicit in the overthrow of legitimately elected democratic governments such as Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973 and Mohammad Mossadegh in Iran in 1953 that was replaced by the Shah resulting in the Ayatollah Khoumeni.

The flavour of the week is the eviction of Saddam Hussein. Who will be next? The message America is sending to the world is summed up very well by John Brady Kiesling, a career U.S. diplomat, in his recent letter of resignation to Colin Powell. He said:

When our friends are afraid of us rather than for us, it is time to worry. And now they are afraid. Who will tell them convincingly that the United States is as it was, a beacon of liberty, security, and justice for the planet?

I understand the fears of some of my constituents who have written, urging that Canada should not upset Americans or we will suffer economic consequences. To them I say that we are not powerless in our economic relationship with the United States. We are their largest trading partner and their largest supplier of energy. In my community we export a great deal of information technology. They buy from us because it serves both our interests. It is important to remember that while we are interdependent economically, we are independent politically.

This war is causing much death and destruction to the people of Iraq. I regret the thousands of casualties. I regret the use of cluster bombs. I regret the threat to use technical nuclear weapons, the ultimate weapons of mass destruction. I regret the fact that the U.S. propaganda machine blames the Iraqis for casualties that the U.S. has caused.

This war is being watched close up as no other conflict before. Muslims, Arabs and people from other cultures, races and religions all around the world have a front row seat. They see America as an aggressor, fighting an antiseptic high tech war from 50,000 feet without concern for the horrific impact on a helpless Muslim civilian population. I fear for the consequences of this action.

I do not want a world where we will be forced to adopt the Israeli lifestyle, where people fear to take the bus or go for a walk with their family. Israel, the military superpower in the Middle East, is caught in a Catch-22 where it has tied its military might and where its military might is undermining the peace that could give it security.

This is where the U.S. policy is leading us, to a world full of Oklahoma style bombings, sniper attacks, anthrax scares and terrorist reprisals, a world where we must sacrifice our rights and freedoms for security.

It is important to remember the words of Thomas Jefferson, “those who give up freedom for security deserve neither security or freedom.”

Also the words of George Washington, who said, “eternal vigilance is the price we pay for freedom.”

I weep for this world. I weep for all the innocent children, Jewish, Christian and Muslim, whose tragic death is equally painful to their parents.

We live on a fragile planet, in a global village. Events such as the ecological disasters of Three Mile Island or Chernobyl that occur in one place resonates throughout.

This war is a setback. We must redouble our efforts in strengthening those international institutions that provide the venues we need to meet these objectives.

Canada has taken the lead in working toward a new world order, where all nations are subject to the rule of international law, all nations give up their weapons of mass destruction and all nations work together for peace; a world order where multilateralism and not unilateralism is the norm.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, it is hard to know where to begin. Let me address something that the hon. member was suggesting about unilateralism versus multilateralism.

Will the member across the way acknowledge that the United Nations hardly has a sterling record when it comes to solving the world's ills? The United Nations was paralyzed on Rwanda. It would not move on Kosovo because of the threatened veto from Russia. Rather clearly it had to be the United States who led a coalition into Kosovo.

Would the member acknowledge that because the United Nations has been paralyzed on the issue of Iraq for 12 years, there have been thousands upon thousands of needless deaths in that country of innocent Kurds, innocent Shia? Because the United Nations would not do its job, thousands of innocent people died. Now someone is stepping in to clean up that mess.

Will the member acknowledge that at the very least this regime change, being undertaken now by the United States, the U.K. and Australia, is a good thing, a positive thing that was not happening with the United Nations?

*Government Orders***SITUATION IN IRAQ**

● (1620)

Mr. Andrew Telegdi: Madam Speaker, let me answer the questions the member has raised. First, I will deal with Kosovo. Kosovo was a regional conflict which fell under the auspices of NATO. The difference between Kosovo and Iraq is this. Ethnic cleansing was taking place in Kosovo.

As much as I supported us going into Kosovo under NATO, I was horrified to see the low value placed on civilian lives. As the House will recall, the war was fought from 50,000 feet high. We had needless slaughter of innocent civilians.

In terms of the UN not doing its job, the United Nations belongs to us all. The United Nations is supposed to get the civilized world acting together. That is the best hope we have for civilization on this planet.

We cannot take a situation where a former colonial power has used chemical weapons in Iraq, and that is England, goes back there tries to say that it is part of a force of liberation. The fact of the matter is, and we all saw it on television, the UN weapons inspectors were destroying missiles that had a range greater than 100 miles. They were being destroyed and then came the war.

The fact is the inspections were working, weapons were being destroyed and the world community was coming together. If there needed to be this action of going to war against Iraq, it would have been done under the auspices of the United Nations. That is a very important difference; the umbrella of the UN versus unilateralism.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, the member was discussing the issue of whether the inspections were working but he might recall that before any missiles were destroyed, about 250,000 troops were gathered around the borders of Iraq. Nothing had happened before that.

I know the Prime Minister had the view as well that we had Saddam contained and things were happening. Does the member think it is realistic to have 250,000 people sitting on the doorstep of Iraq to force the Iraqi government to comply; this madman of Saddam Hussein who did nothing for 12 years to comply? Does the hon. member think that is a realistic solution?

Mr. Andrew Telegdi: Madam Speaker, as President Carter said, war should be the last resort, when all peaceful means are exhausted. It would have been easy enough to get more people from the United Nations over there to say that they would be there to watch that the disarming happened.

The reality is that this has been a unilateral action. I am not surprised at the Alliance and I am not surprised that we are disagreeing on this. I know if the Alliance was the government, Canada would be at war and it would be the highest priority. I recognize that. That is where we fundamentally disagree. I believe in the multilateralism of the United Nations as the best way in moving forward and working toward a secure world.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise to indicate that Thursday, April 10 shall not be an allotted day.

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Medicine Hat.

What we have just heard was evidence from that ambassador from the Baath party opposite that all of the Prime Minister's protestations about an end to anti-Americanism from the Liberals has had absolutely no effect. We have just heard a recitation of some of the most hoary old anti-American canards that one could hear in a sophomore Trotskyite teach-in at any college where people are reading Noam Chomsky. That was absolutely ridiculous.

With respect, this is a moral issue. People like the member opposite are going to have to be accountable and are today, to those in Iraq who are finally tasting liberty, those who are celebrating their liberators, those who are welcoming the American and British troops who have risked their lives in order to free that country from a man who is likely the most brutal tyrant in the world today.

As an example, I am going to quote from a report in today's *The New York Times* from Qalat Sukkar, a Shi'ite town near the Iranian border, where U.S. marines, the very ones that the member despises and would call agents of American imperialism, were welcomed with a rapturous greeting. The entire community came out of their homes and began to chant in English, "Stay, stay, U.S.A."

According to the article:

The euphoria nearly spilled over into a riot. Children pulled at the marines, jumped on their trucks, wanting to shake their hands, touch their cheeks. A single chicken hung in the butcher's window and still the residents wanted to give the Americans something, anything. Cigarette? Money?

"You are owed a favour from the Iraqis" said Ibrahim Shouqyk, a clean and remarkably well-dressed man, considering the abject poverty here. "We dedicate our loyalty to the Americans and the British. We are friends."

That is the voice of Iraqis, not the voice of comfortable, Canadian, Liberal, morally superior anti-Americans who do not understand that sometimes American foreign policy is flawed and sometimes mistakes are made in military action. But fundamentally, the conflict in Iraq today will lead to an immeasurably better and freer life for millions upon millions of people who have suffered under oppression now for 35 years.

I say shame on those who do not have sufficient moral clarity, who are so parochial, who are so attached to whatever twisted ideology they adopted during the Vietnam war as students, that they cannot see the moral purpose behind removing a tyrant like that from power.

That member made an appeal to the humanitarian argument in favour of the non-UN sanctioned military action in Kosovo where the Prime Minister authorized, with neither a vote of the House nor support of the Security Council, an 85 day bombing campaign on Serbia.

Government Orders

What preceded that according to Human Rights Watch and the United Nations itself was an ethnic cleansing campaign by Serbian paramilitaries that led to the deaths of an estimated 8,500 Kosovar civilians. That is tragic. Each one required, I agree, military action to stop those paramilitaries and the government which supported them. That member and his government were willing to suspend their much vaunted dedication to that glorious institution, the United Nations, in order to save thousands of Kosovars from that kind of ethnic cleansing.

Since 1979 over 1.2 million Iraqis have lost their lives as a result of the Ba'ath regime of Saddam Hussein. At least 145,000 Kurdish civilians have lost their lives. The member talked about genocide, but what about the genocide of 145,000 Kurds? What about the genocide of 250,000 Shia Arabs? What about the mass executions and torture and rape of tens of thousands of dissidents in Iraq arrested simply for the crime of questioning their regime?

● (1625)

I had a press conference in this building two weeks ago with representatives of the Iraqi exile community, one of whom broke into tears when he talked about the fact that he could not even trust his children at home. He talked about the fact that his nephew had once heard his father at home criticize Saddam Hussein and that the Fedayeen secret police arrived at the schools and interrogated children about their parents' sentiments toward the regime. This child, whether bribed with candies or threatened with a beating, admitted that his father had once criticized Saddam at home. Before that child arrived back home from school, his father was gone.

That was six years ago and he still has not come back. Who knows if he ended up in one of Saddam's acid baths or was fed to a room full of wild dogs which consume political dissidents? Who knows what happened to him?

That Iraqi Canadian, like the vast majority of Iraqi Canadians, broke into tears recalling the tyranny of a regime which that member would have continue in power to satisfy some completely irrelevant theory about the supremacy of the United Nations. He believes there is some kind of moral authority resident in an organization like the Security Council, populated by countries like France, Russia, China and Syria.

France, Russia and China sold 94% of the conventional weapons that Saddam used to terrorize his people, invade two neighbours, hurtle scud missiles against the civilians of Israel. They sold 94% of the weaponry to Iraq between 1972 and 1990 according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. France and Russia systematically violated the UN sanctions which were an effort to create a policy of containment to prevent a military conflict. They did so for commercial reasons, according to Human Rights Watch. They even opposed the creation of an ad hoc international tribunal through the UN Security Council to try to indict and prosecute Saddam and the thugs of the Baath regime because of, according to Human Rights Watch, "their extensive commercial interests in Iraq".

He would have a country like Syria help to govern Canada's policy on the liberation of an oppressed people. I suggest there is no moral content in that position. There is no dignity in the horse trading and the advancement of national interests in the most crass fashion which characterizes the United Nations.

I am understandably upset to hear that kind of drivel. American and British men and women have died in the past weeks. So too, tragically, have Iraqi civilians died, according to their Goebbels-esque clown of an information minister, fewer than 1,000, which is amazing in a military action of this nature. Every one of those deaths is tragic, but out of those deaths will come a better life, one characterized we hope, we pray, by at least some basic human dignity, and a regime which respects fundamental human rights, which allows some action for human liberty, which instead of raping the resources of what ought to be one of the wealthiest countries in the world, directs them to human development and the development of civil society.

Liberals in Canada who talk the talk of multilateralism are not prepared to walk the walk, talk about democracy and human rights but are not prepared to bring it to an oppressed people even through a rhetorical political endorsement of the allied action, I say it is a shame and a disgrace. So too is the motion before us today, insofar as it fails to endorse the removal of the Baath regime, the liberation of the Iraqi people. It begins by endorsing the House's decision to oppose the military action and then it says, in a characteristically Liberal fashion, that we support the war objectives but we do not support regime change.

The Prime Minister said that resolution 1441 was sufficient authority to go in and then he changed his mind. Then he said that containment was sufficient while his UN ambassador was arguing for a two week deadline.

● (1630)

The policy of the government on one of the definitive issues of our time has been a fraud and an embarrassment to this country. That is why I will vote against the motion.

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague across the way accused me of being a Trotskyite. I am a Liberal, let me say. He accused me of being a comfortable Liberal.

Unlike most members of the House, I have actually experienced what war and revolution are about. I knew what oppression was under the Soviet Union. I knew what happened during the Hungarian revolution which in part was incited by the United States of America through Radio Free Europe and promises of help and then no help came in 1956 when the Soviet tanks rolled in. I very strongly believe in multilateralism and that is exactly the reason why.

My playground was the bombed out buildings of Budapest. I know what it means to stand in line all night to get a loaf of bread.

To me this is not about theory. To me it is living with people who have lost fathers, mothers, grandparents and children. This is what it is about to me.

Was Iraq going to be disarmed? Yes, it was going to be disarmed. If it was going to happen it was going to happen because the world community was coming together and was going to make it happen. But unilateral action has been taken.

Government Orders

I am ashamed that the member across the way would equate that to morality. When innocent civilians die, it is not being done in the name of God or any morality. I can say there is a special place reserved in hell for those people who use religious and moral beliefs for waging war.

A TV program played on the CBC in the last couple of weeks. It showed the slaughter of the people of Iraq, the Kurds in Iraq. Who was complicit in supplying the weapons over there? Who was complicit in supplying the helicopters? It was the government of Ronald Reagan.

The UN is far from perfect but it is the best hope we have in this global village.

• (1635)

Mr. Jason Kenney: Madam Speaker, that is a complete falsehood.

I invite the member to look at the data of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. It indicates clearly that the United States between 1977 and 1990 exported 1% of the arms shipments to Iraq, whereas his moral exemplars of China, Russia and France were responsible for 94% of the weapons imported by Iraq, including the helicopters to which he referred.

He talked about his experience in central Europe. Is it not interesting that every country of central Europe under the former Soviet choke, his own Hungary, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Poland, Romania and Croatia all support the allied action precisely because they understand what it is to live under tyranny.

There is an article in today's *The New York Times* quoting at length those people in China who lived under Mao's tyranny supporting the American action because they too identify with it. He talked about the tragedy of civilians who have died in the conflict, according to the Iraqi government fewer than 1,000 remarkably.

That is one-fifth the number of civilians who died on an average day under Saddam's regime, with 1.2 million Iraqis dead over 24 years. That is over 5,000 a day. People on the left criticize the policy of containment and the sanctions regime for killing 6,000 Iraqi children every day. The number of civilians who have died as a result of this war of liberation is a fraction of one day's death toll under Saddam's continued leadership.

How many more Iraqis was he prepared to see die as a result of deprivation and acts of aggression by their own government before finally acting to liberate them? Would he be willing to go over there, maybe with his colleague from Brampton, and look those liberated Iraqis in the face and say that he wishes Saddam continued in power because he is more concerned about his prejudice toward the United States and its use of power than he is about liberating people living under a tyranny?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Windsor West, Infrastructure; the hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt, The Budget.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise and debate the motion today.

I want to compliment my friend from Calgary Southeast for the outstanding job he has done of defending the interests of Canada and of western civilization in general and for pointing to the flaws in the arguments of I think well-meaning members across the way who are completely naive about the degree of evil that exists in parts of the world like Iraq under people like Saddam Hussein.

The first thing I want to do is point to the motion that we are debating today, wherein the government speaks of the "unbreakable bonds of values, family, friendship and mutual respect that will always characterize Canada's relationship with the United States of America and the United Kingdom".

The first thing I have to do is point out how contrary to the spirit of that motion the speech was that we heard from the member for Kitchener—Waterloo. He referred in sneering terms to the neo-conservatives of the United States and basically spent his whole speech running down United States foreign policy. He did not speak about the friendship between Canada and the United States and the United Kingdom. All he did was run down our American friends, our friends who are not only our biggest trading partners. That is not what the debate is about, by the way, but it is an important point to make. Somebody pointed out to me that out of Kitchener—Waterloo about \$9 billion worth of exports in high tech goes to the United States every year.

I am surprised that the member is completely unconscious of that fact, but what this is about is doing what is morally right. Irrespective of what the member across the way said about war never being about God and morality, I do not know what else it could be about. Should war be about economic concerns? Is that a reason to go to war? Or should war be about morality? Should it be about protecting innocent people? I think it should. I think that is what it should be about. I think the only time we should be going to war is to protect innocent people.

Sometimes it is a defensive war and sometimes, as in this case, it is a pre-emptive war, where the United States rightly said, "We are not going to allow our enemies to attack us on our soil again". The United States had just gone through it. The United States said that it was not going to allow a nation that has weapons of mass destruction to continue to threaten it and to continue to defy the United Nations for 12 years.

I want to take up a point that my friend raised during the questions and answers, and yes, the member for Kitchener—Waterloo conveniently ignored the question. He said, "Is it not true that the United Nations would never have been able to enforce the inspections unless there had been 250,000 American and British troops poised on the border of Iraq?" That is the only reason there were inspections going on. So here is the question for the member for Kitchener—Waterloo: Did he really expect that they could just stay there month after month, 250,000 people poised on the border? Obviously not. They could not stay there.

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The only reason the UN had any luck at all with trying to get inspectors in was that the Americans had acted so-called unilaterally, even though that in itself is ridiculous when there are 49 countries in the coalition. I hardly see how it can be unilateral when there are 49 countries in the coalition.

In other words, the only reason it worked to the degree it did is that the United States went in and pre-deployed troops, along with the U.K. Thank God they did, because finally they moved in and today we have an Iraq that is freer, an Iraq where people are ultimately celebrating their liberators, an Iraq that will soon be free of that tyrant, Saddam Hussein, who has killed in excess of a million people. He has been responsible for the deaths of over a million people.

I am surprised at my friend across the way, the member from Ancaster, who is chirping away on this. In the lead-up to this debate he spoke about what he calls the fact of the Turkish democracy being superior to the democracy of the United Kingdom and the United States. He spoke about that in the debate that we had on the Bloc motion.

● (1640)

All of this clamouring to get on the bandwagon now is so disingenuous when it comes from people like the member from Ancaster and the member for Kitchener—Waterloo. How much do they really value our friendship with the United States and the United Kingdom? We know very well they are being dragged kicking and screaming to the point where they have to support this resolution, because they do not believe in it. We heard it just a minute ago from the member for Kitchener—Waterloo. All he could do was sneer at the United States for his entire 10 minute speech.

It is very difficult for me to stand here and be composed. I have to say that this is the most disappointed I have been in this government in the nine and a half years I have been here, not only as a member of Parliament but as a Canadian.

Today we celebrated the anniversary of the Prime Minister's election to the House of Commons. Good for him, but I think it more than passing strange that he would celebrate this anniversary on the same day that he brought forward a motion that underlines perhaps his greatest failure as a member of Parliament: his undermining of our traditional friendship between Canada and the United States and the United Kingdom. What an unbelievable legacy. He has made himself relevant by making Canada less relevant on the world stage. Is that not a wonderful legacy for the Prime Minister? But that in fact is what he has done.

For our entire history as a country we had a privileged place at the ear of the United States. The United States has emerged as the world's greatest superpower. We had the chance to temper the Americans if we felt they were acting in a way that we thought was unreasonable. Do hon. members think that they will listen to Canada now after the way the Prime Minister has allowed the slurs to flow from the government side of the House? Of course they will not. We have already seen the repercussions of what the Prime Minister has permitted. We have seen the United States freeze us out on all kinds of discussions.

Unbelievably, members across the way are now suggesting that Canada should play some kind of important role when it comes to the humanitarian effort in Iraq. Of course we would like to, but now that we have completely alienated the one country which basically has the control of Iraq right now, what are the chances of Canada playing the role that we really should be playing there? What are the chances of that? We refused to support the United States. Now we are trying to clamour our way onto the bandwagon. I expect that we will get exactly the response we deserve, which will be, "Where were you when we needed you, our best friends?"

● (1645)

About a year ago I went to NORAD along with members from all sides of the House. I saw how Canadian and American soldiers worked so well together, fantastically well together. We get a tremendous bargain in NORAD. We pay hardly any of the bills. We share joint responsibility for the defence of North American airspace.

On September 11, 2001, when those planes flew into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, it was a Canadian at the helm of NORAD. It was a Canadian who made the decision to work with the Federal Aviation Administration to pull the planes out of the air. It was a Canadian general who had to be called to make the ultimate decision. Canadians were in control.

We have a privileged relationship with our best friends, the United States, and what did we do to it over the last 18 months? When the World Trade Center was destroyed and the Pentagon was attacked and that plane went into the fields in Pennsylvania, it took a week for this government to respond. Unbelievably, there was an outpouring from Canadians, but from this government, nothing.

Where were we when it came to supporting the United States at a time when it felt threatened by what was going on in Iraq? Rightly, the Americans decided that we cannot allow Saddam Hussein, a murderous thug, to continue to do as he wants to do, which is to build weapons of mass destruction and thumb his nose at UN sanctions after 12 years. When they wanted to deal with that issue because they were afraid for their security, what did we do? We sat on the sidelines. We could have pre-deployed troops. We could have helped those inspectors do their jobs. What did we do? We did nothing.

This resolution coming from the government after what it has done is just a joke. It is an absolute joke; to run them down on the one hand, for the Prime Minister to allow his caucus, his staff and his cabinet ministers to run down the Americans, and then when they are on the verge of victory, to say, "By the way, we value your friendship". It is just unbelievable that they would have the moxie, the nerve, to do that.

I will vote against this and I will simply say in closing that I have never been more ashamed of my government than I am today.

● (1650)

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member for Medicine Hat, I heard him clearly disparage Turkey for its attempts at democracy. The member for Calgary Southeast, in his remarks, disparaged China, Russia, Germany and France. These are not gentle terms of disparagement. These are real slurs.

Government Orders

It seems to me that the argument that the Canadian Alliance is making is that to be pro-American one has to speak disparagingly and to slur and condemn other nations, other nations that may not have democracies as advanced as ours. But we as Canadians should respect all nations. That is what characterizes us as Canadians. I find it appalling that they should equate pro-Americanism with disparaging other countries of the world. Where will it stop?

Let me ask the member opposite one question. In talking about the attack on Iraq, he is constantly talking about Americans. I am not so sure that Americans is what he means. Surely he is really talking about the administration that is in the White House now in most of remarks. So let me ask him, does he think that if the president were Mr. Gore or Mr. Carter or Mr. Clinton, instead of Mr. Bush, the United States would have attacked Iraq under the current circumstances?

Mr. Monte Solberg: Of course, Madam Speaker, it was Bill Clinton who went to Kosovo and did the right thing there and that was without the United Nations behind him, because the Russians were prepared to veto what was going on there.

I just want to respond to what the member said a moment ago about Turkey. First I want to make clear what I said. I said that the member said that Turkey had a superior democracy to the United States' and the U.K.'s. He will not deny that he said that because it is part of *Hansard*. I checked the record after he said it.

I want to point out that it was—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): On a point of order, the hon. member for Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot.

Mr. John Bryden: Madam Speaker, I did not say that. If we check *Hansard*, we will see that I did not say any such thing. The member should be careful in his language because *Hansard* can be checked.

Mr. Monte Solberg: Madam Speaker, I want to remind the member of what happened to Kurds in Turkey. I want to ask him about the human rights treatment they have received at the hands of the Turks. Is it what he views as a model democracy? I would hope not.

I want to remind him when he talks about China, for instance, and he suggests that I slandered China. I am slandering its human rights record. China is a country where every year there are 25,000 summary executions of people. Look at what the Chinese have done to the people of Tibet. Look at Falun Gong. Look at how they treat the Christians.

I know that one of my colleagues is preparing to move a motion at some point that would call on the House to press the Chinese to release a prominent Christian leader who was kidnapped by the Chinese from Vietnam and who has been held without trial for years.

Is that the sort of human rights record that my friend across the way admires?

Of course I do slander that record. I admit it. I say that it is an system inferior to the United States', the U.K.'s and Canada's. I am embarrassed that the member would align himself with that kind of government.

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Madam Speaker, of course I am not suggesting that any of these countries have democracies that are superior to those of Canada, the United States or Britain. I think one of the great tragedies here is this attempt to bring our values to those countries by force of arms. I do not think that is going to be successful.

But the member opposite did not answer my question. Let me ask it again more precisely. Does he think that were the White House occupied by President Carter, for example, or Al Gore, should he have been fortunate enough, the United States would be now at war with Iraq under the current circumstances?

• (1655)

Mr. Monte Solberg: Madam Speaker, my friend across the way advises me that regime change was the policy of Gore. I suppose that answers the question, but I do not know that we should turn to former president Carter necessarily to get our guidance on foreign policy.

Most people would acknowledge that Mr. Carter was a little less than successful when it came to foreign policy, even as the one who was supposed to go and disarm North Korea, for which he won a Nobel Peace prize, only to find out that we did not really disarm North Korea. In fact, the whole time that he was negotiating and supposedly striking a deal, North Korea ended up building nuclear weapons. That is really not the sort of policy we want to follow.

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord.

We are at an important point in relations between Canada and the United States. Even before the war began, journalists, academics and the business community were already involved in a lively and inspired debate over the future of our bilateral relations. The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade had released a major report called "Partners in North America: Advancing Canada's Relations with the United States and Mexico".

The events of recent days have led us to realize how much our interests are interlinked and how much our relations are integrated and interdependent. There is no relationship more important to Canada than our relationship with the United States.

We all know how things stand. Thanks to the North American Free Trade Agreement, our trade with the United States more than doubled between 1989 and 2002, and it is now at a level of around \$2 billion each day. Our bilateral and economic relations with our southern neighbours support millions of jobs in both countries and impact directly on the lives of most Canadians and many Americans.

We recognize that Canada's decision to refrain from participating in the military campaign in Iraq has disappointed our American friends. We sought to achieve a consensus at the United Nations Security Council but unfortunately that was not possible. It is not the first time and probably not the last that Canada and the United States have taken different approaches to a specific issue, especially in the area of foreign policy.

Government Orders

Canada has two major assets to help us through this period where our opinions diverge in the area of foreign policy with our closest friend and neighbour. First, we have excellent personal relations with the Americans at every level and in all sectors, and second, we share a single vision of North American security and prosperity. We share common values and principles. We have developed strong ties of friendship over the years and we agree that our future depends above all on the North America we are building together.

We must maintain and develop the profound links that exist between all parts of our societies, as well as with our counterparts in the U.S. government. I encourage members of Parliament as well as our business people and other Canadian partners to emphasize once again to their American contacts the strength of our friendship and relations, and to point out Canada's positive contributions to North American security and prosperity.

We share a common vision of North America's security and prosperity. Concerning continental security, we share the defence of North American air space with the Americans through Norad, the North American Aerospace Defence Command. We are in the Organization of American States. We have numerous bilateral military agreements with the Americans and of course, we are partners in NATO.

Canada has taken measures jointly with the United States to secure the safety of our continent. We have provided \$5 billion in new security spending, more on a per capita basis than the United States. We have tightened up our laws on refugees, immigration and funding of terrorist activities.

Abroad we continue to support the anti-terrorism campaign. In Afghanistan, we had the fourth largest military contingent in a coalition against terrorism in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. A naval force is still patrolling the Arabian Sea along with our land force commitments in Bosnia and Kosovo.

In cooperation with the United States, we have taken energetic steps to guarantee border security while ensuring that the border remains open for the trade that is vital for the prosperity of our two countries.

As members know, the Deputy Prime Minister and homeland security Secretary Ridge signed a smart border accord in December 2001 to implement a dynamic 30 point action plan containing measures to fast-track pre-screened goods and travellers, assign customs personnel to each other's key ports, and share information on high risk travellers. With the higher level of threat to the United States, the border is currently experiencing its first real tests and all the indications are that this cooperation is paying off.

● (1700)

Thanks to NAFTA we have become a strong, secure partner in the energy field. Few people realize that Canada is the largest supplier of petroleum products to the United States, even larger than Saudi Arabia or Venezuela. In fact, Canada supplies 17% of the imported crude and refined oil products imported by the United States. We supply 100% of its electricity imports and 94% of its natural gas imports.

Canada has succeeded in taking the lead and positioning itself well by reaping tremendous trade benefits, expanding the North

American energy market, ensuring that our common border operates in a smart, effective way, and enhancing our cooperation for the defence of the continent.

This is a position I support and that all members of the government fully support. I am an eternal optimist. I am convinced that our strong relations with the United States will overcome this challenging time. We have seen no serious problems in trade patterns. As Canadians, we must remain confident and maintain our excellent personal links. We must remain confident that we will get through the challenge we are currently facing.

As a member of Parliament from Atlantic Canada, in particular Prince Edward Island, we have shared hundreds of thousands of immigrants with the United States over the years since Confederation. For decades after Confederation our people found work and prosperity in the American states, as have their descendants who are now spread all over the United States from Florida to California. For over 150 years, fish, potatoes, lumber and now technology have found consumers in the United States. Maine sometimes gets upset with potato trucks driving down the highway to New England, but that happens in competition and usually it happens during an American election year.

Our ties are strong and unbreakable between our two countries and they will only get stronger as our contribution to one another becomes better known by both sides of the border.

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed listening to the member and I have a couple of questions for him.

There is some evidence that the relationship between the United States and Canada is at an all time low and that it is effecting trade. We have some examples of that in my own constituency with small businesses that live along the border. It has hurt us.

I wish to criticize the previous Liberal position on the Organization of American States. When we were sitting on that side of the House as the government in 1990, we joined the Organization of American States, but the Liberal party objected to that. It raged against it.

Why the change of heart on that one? I contend that it was another example of that thin thread of anti-Americanism that sometimes rears its ugly head in the Liberal Party.

Mr. Joe McGuire: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member goes back in history, it was not just this Liberal Party, or the Liberal Party of Canada at the time who refused membership to the OAS. Many Conservative governments also refused. It was not until the early 90s that we joined the organization. However, once we joined the organization we became full and active partners. It is a move that is much appreciated by a lot of other countries outside the United States that look to Canada for support and direction.

On the comment that we have lost trade with the United States and that relations are not exactly what they should be, we did not have to stay out of a war for that to happen. Over the years there were lots of times that our trade with the United States had been impaired.

As far as my province is concerned, twice in the past seven or eight years, just on the potato virus and the PVY-n virus, our exports have been impaired. The U.S. is our largest consumer of potatoes, as is the case with the member's province. He should know that because a lot of his potato products were also barred from going to the United States. The U.S. was bitter and we were bitter toward it for blocking our trade in this particular commodity. It applied a great number of non-tariff barriers to our free flow of trade and even though we were not pleased we worked through it. Eventually our trade renewed and it progressed back and forth across the border as usual.

This will also happen with this little blip in our economic relations with the United States. It might take a little time, but I do not see any significant harm being done to our trade. It is mutually beneficial for both the United States and Canada that business continue as usual.

• (1705)

Mr. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my hon. colleague's comments, especially those regarding trade. It is interesting to note that he is suggesting that our lack of participation in the war will not hurt trade in the long term.

There is the dispute that is happening now regarding softwood lumber and agriculture, and the tariffs on both. That is okay because it is a dispute between different groups in two different countries. They are minor disputes which can be worked out through negotiations. However, I received a call from a constituent who is trucking in the United States and he is having a difficult time right now. He told me that this is not a small dispute over minor things but goes to the root of the different views that one nation has with the other regarding its involvement.

I do not believe we should have gone to war because of economics or because of our relationship. We should have gone to war because of values. We should have gone if it was the right thing to do and it respected the values of Canadians as a peace loving and freedom loving people who stand up for human rights.

Does my colleague believe that when we trade \$1.5 million a minute with the United States it will not have any long term impact on the economy of this country?

Mr. Joe McGuire: Mr. Speaker, I find that a peculiar comment coming from a member of the Alliance because it encourages the Americans at every opportunity.

In its efforts to dismantle the Canadian Wheat Board, that party is encouraging the Americans to take the wheat board to various trade tribunals in order to destroy it. The wheat board has been an integral part of the development of western Canada for decades. It has been in place for a reason and that reason has not been removed.

To this point in time, the wheat board has been investigated about seven or eight times, and each time it has been found to be a fair trader. With the encouragement of the Alliance, the Americans are trying to bring down one of the most important organizations in western Canada.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Harvey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, even though we have taken part many times in armed conflict, I think that within the framework of this debate we must get back to the essential aspects of the role which Canada has always played throughout its history and which it wants to strengthen.

It seems to me that the motion before the House refers to the basic characteristics of the role we want Canada to assume. It refers to the "substantial sense of the House" in the vote of March 20, 2003.

It also refers to:

—the unbreakable bonds of values, family, friendship and mutual respect that will always characterize Canada's relationship with the United States of America and the United Kingdom;

I feel it is important to specify that, because very often we get into the debate without necessarily taking the time to stop and look at the text of the motion.

It also talks about:

—our pride in the work of the members of the Canadian Forces who are deployed in the Persian Gulf region;

It is very important to make it clear that we are now involved in two interventions at once. There is the intervention against international terrorism, in which Canada has been providing ongoing support to all its allies to fight this truly profound evil.

The reference to our armed forces in the Persian Gulf relates to this aspect; we have an ongoing collaboration with the U.S. government on our own continent. Extraordinary measures are being taken and have been taken, and will be taken in terms of legislation on the issue of security in all sectors of economic activity.

There is also the whole issue of border security. I think it is worthwhile to point out that the work we are doing to fight terrorism is an important measurement and a perfect illustration of the cooperation we offer to the U.S. government.

We are all aware that September 11 was an excessively deep wound, for the entire western world, and especially for our neighbours to the south. That is why we are cooperating. On the morning after, we set the whole government machinery in motion, in cooperation with the U.S. government, to be able to take extraordinarily effective measures to fight terrorism.

That is one aspect of the current conflict to which we have committed ourselves fully, spending several billion dollars on quite extraordinary measures so that the events of September 11 will never be repeated.

Government Orders

The motion before us says everything we want it to, which is that this conflict be resolved rapidly. The faster it is resolved, the lower the costs. This is important. This war could cost \$100, \$200, \$300 or \$400 billion. That was one to the main reasons behind Canada's position. In addition to ensuring that the fewest possible people are killed, we must consider the considerable costs. This money could have been used elsewhere for other missions. That is why Canada hopes wholeheartedly for a rapid resolution to this conflict.

There is also mention of the importance of self restraint, by members of our party and those of other parties. Sometimes, it seems as if some people want, consciously or unconsciously, the misunderstanding between our two countries to grow and, for political reasons, for it to have rapid, immediate and senseless consequences.

Our role as parliamentarians is to promote national reconciliation and work to rebuild bridges, when there are problems between various countries, or even among ourselves, here in Canada.

There is another important part in this motion. It mentions the importance of Canada committing to reconstruction. I will have an opportunity in a few minutes to say more about this.

What must be stressed is that we, as parliamentarians, bear considerable responsibility.

• (1710)

We are messengers of reconciliation, not the kind of people who will go around making inflammatory speeches to widen the divide between coalition members and those who would have preferred a different approach.

Our role as parliamentarians is to emphasize the importance of the United Nations, an international forum which Canada values and which will be increasingly called upon to deal with the challenges facing our decidedly global village.

With due care, the role of the United Nations should help improve the organization's credibility and performance, fight real battles and real wars and, indirectly, achieve cost savings. How many hundreds of billions are going to be spent on resolving a problem we might have been able to resolve? This is not intended as a value judgment on the coalition's decision. However, a less expensive solution might have been possible, provided UN inspectors had been given, as suggested by the Prime Minister, a few more weeks to do their job. There would have been substantial cost savings. Moreover, the United Nations would have been able to go through the process of reconciling its role with the reality of a dangerous potential conflict.

Unfortunately, without making a value judgment about them, our allies chose the fast lane. The quickest solutions are not always the best in the long run. The fact of the matter is that what is true for democracy is also true for problem solving. There are similarities with nature. Democracy works somewhat the same way. Nature must be given time.

I was fully confident that we were in the process of giving the UN a role absolutely essential to its future, by bringing together all the countries willing to work toward the resolution of a conflict. We could have disarmed Iraq and perhaps, eventually, put an end to 12

years or so of an embargo that is causing great hardship to the people of Iraq.

Personally, I firmly believe that our role and all the credibility we want the UN to have start with showing respect for this organization. For the UN to see that, after one, two or three weeks of negotiations, five, ten, fifteen or twenty countries unilaterally decide to resort to the quickest solution to settle the issue may not always be the best approach in my opinion.

The role that Canada has chosen is to strengthen the bargaining power of the United Nations. As the Prime Minister said, our most important mission is definitely to strengthen the UN. We are doing this in the fight against terrorism by allocating considerable funds, as other countries are doing.

I believe, to illustrate our good faith, that Canada has adopted significant measures for many years now to fight poverty in many countries around the world, particularly in Iraq. Since 1990, we have invested \$35 million, not through secret organizations that do not know what needs to be done on the ground, but with UN aid, with the assistance of all of the UN organizations that have very specific mandates. If we want to strengthen the role of the UN and confer more powers to intervene upon these organizations that depend on the UN, we have to trust them and work together with them.

In this vein, the interventions that have been carried out deal with food and medical supplies. We have worked with international committees of the Red Cross and many non-governmental organizations. We participated in drawing up plans to intervene in Iraq. We have invested several million dollars together with UN organizations.

• (1715)

Sometimes people say that it is too bad that we are not involved directly in the military action. However, we are already at the reconstruction stage. It is an unfortunate fact, but this is a stage that will be critically important.

I hope that this period will allow us to renew the credibility of the work done by the UN through our role as peacekeepers around the world and particularly through our work in the reconstruction of Iraq.

I hope that the next war to be declared—and it was, indirectly, during the Kananaskis summit by the Prime Minister of Canada—will be the war on poverty. In this war, all of the contributing countries will come together in order to do everything they can to fight poverty around the world, as effectively as possible.

I am convinced that once we succeed in eradicating poverty, a great many armed conflicts will disappear. That is certainly the best guarantee for the development of democracy around the world.

• (1720)

[*English*]

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Windsor—St. Clair.

Government Orders

I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to the motion. The first thing I would like to do is raise the question as to why we are debating this motion today. Like many Canadians, I have been watching TV and seeing the images of the war on Iraq, and seeing the images of the U.S. tanks rolling into the city of Baghdad. I think many people see the end in sight. Hopefully that will happen soon and we will not see more casualties.

However it raises an interesting question as to why the government decided to bring in this motion today reaffirming its decision of September 20 not to participate in the military intervention in Iraq and the other aspects of the motion.

I think the motion is a reactive motion. It is a motion that has come about as a result of the politics and the political debate that is taking place. It is in reaction to the official opposition motion that we debated last Thursday in the House.

It is a very sad statement that we are debating this motion when what we needed to see was a motion put before the House weeks and weeks ago, even before a war started, that would have clearly laid out, in a principled, clear and unequivocal way, the government's position in terms of a possible war at that time on Iraq.

I am very disappointed that we are debating a motion that is almost after the fact. It seems to me that it is a very classical Liberal motion. It is one that tries to cover everything all ways. It tries to cover both sides of the fence, so to speak, for the Liberals who want to have it all ways. When we read through the motion, it is characterized very much in that way.

As members know from the debate today, the NDP is not in support of the motion. We think the motion is very problematic and contradictory. It does not spell out in clear terms what the government is trying to accomplish. In fact, even the very first clause, which talks about a reaffirmation of the government's decision to not participate in the military intervention in Iraq, is hugely contradictory. As we know, from what we have seen every day during question period, during other debates that have taken place and through the debate that takes place in the media, the government's position has been very contradictory.

On the one hand, we hear from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister and from the defence minister that Canada is not involved, and yet every day there is evidence and information that shows us that Canadian troops and Canadian personnel are participating in the gulf. They are on the ground, in the air and part of the AWACS that is participating in the targeting of bombing that is taking place. There has been information on what daughter is being sent to the 5th fleet. To say that the House is reaffirming a decision not to participate is simply not correct. All of the evidence shows us that the Government of Canada is participating in Bush's war on Iraq.

The other problem we have with the motion has to do with the fourth clause which states:

our hope that the U.S.-led coalition accomplishes its mission as quickly as possible with the fewest casualties;

That does not accurately describe what is taking place. On the one hand, the Canadian government is saying that we will not participate but, on the other hand, the Prime Minister and other representatives

of the government are refusing to stand up and clearly articulate that this war is illegal under international law.

I remember the Minister of Foreign Affairs saying to the House that Canada respects the sovereign decision of the U.S. to go ahead with its invasion of Iraq. It seems to me that the very point of international law and the reason we raise the question of international law is that international law prevents states from making sovereign decisions that are illegal.

• (1725)

The particular clause I quoted, which talks about our hope that the U.S. coalition accomplishes its mission, is hypocritical because that mission, as we know, has to do with a regime change in Iraq. That has been clearly stated by the President of the United States.

Again we have very contradictory messages. We hear the Prime Minister saying that we do not support intervention for the purpose of a regime change and yet we have seen the involvement of 1,300 Canadian troops and personnel in an effort that is very much about a regime change in Iraq.

I think the best way we could have avoided casualties would have been to give a very clear signal that the United Nations weapons inspection process should have been given a chance to work. Somehow we have lost sight of the work in which the UN was engaged, which was about verification and accountability in the international community. This has been lost in this agenda. It has suddenly changed from weapons of mass destruction, which, by the way, were not found, to becoming a regime change.

We in the NDP have been consistent in our views on this. We are opposed to the mission that has been led by the U.S. It is a violation of international law and it is outside of the United Nations, and that allegedly the government also had serious questions with.

Another part of the government's motion that we have a lot of problems with in terms of the way it is characterized is the next part of the motion that reads:

the importance of self restraint on the part of all Members of the House in their comments on the war in Iraq while our American friends are in battle;

Presumably that part of the motion deals with what is being termed as anti-Americanism. However I think if we were to look at the debate that has taken place in the House, we would see that the government itself has been playing into the whole idea of anti-Americanism to defend its position.

Yesterday during question period I asked the defence minister to clearly articulate Canada's position in terms of armed forces personnel being in the Persian Gulf. His response to me yesterday was:

—this perpetual NDP complaining, anti-Americanism does get on one's nerves after awhile.

That was the minister himself saying that, playing into and fostering this idea of anti-Americanism, when in actual fact the question had clearly been directed at the government in terms of calling on the government to clearly outline its position in terms of our troops and personnel in the area.

Government Orders

It was interesting to see that shortly after question period the defence minister was asked by the media in a scrum to cite the case of NDP anti-Americanism. The minister could not come up with anything except to say "Use your imagination". Clearly he does not have any factual basis nor does he have any imagination.

I wanted to reference that particular point because I find it very frustrating that the government urges members to be restrained in the House but it uses the argument and defence of other people being anti-American to somehow defend its own position.

I think that within the international community, and Canada as a sovereign nation, we have the right and in fact the responsibility to be critical of policies, whether they be American or British. However to simply characterize that as being anti-American is an insult to the kind of debate that we need to have over international policy and law around war. We really take offence to that.

The last point I want to make concerns Canada's commitment to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq. We again have the same kind of doublespeak from the Liberal motion here. There is no mention of the United Nations. Even Tony Blair has said that he believes it is important for the United Nations to have a role. Why is the Government of Canada not being clear on its position?

• (1730)

We have seen George Bush undermine the United Nations. This would be an opportunity for Canada to clearly say that the role of the United Nations should be affirmed.

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak to the motion and to again reaffirm the position of the party that we will not be supporting it.

The Liberal government is once again attempting to have it both ways. After much urging from us, from the peace movement and from a whole cross-section of Canadians, it finally indicated a few weeks ago that it would not involve this country in any military action in Iraq. I wonder if it understood that it did that. However it did it based on the principle that the war being proposed by the U.S. administration and the Blair administration in the U.K. was one that was ill-founded under international law, ill-founded under the UN charter and ill-founded, quite frankly, on any kind of moral basis. We stood on that principle when the Prime Minister stood up in the House and made the announcement.

What we see now and what we have seen over the last few weeks is the government attempting to have it both ways. It is trying to move away from principle, to vacillate and to appease that part of the U.S. government that is so strongly against the position that we took. I suppose one might say, even to appease the Alliance Party, but I am not sure about that.

If we go back to the basic principle and look at the terms of the resolution we see repeatedly where the government is moving away from principle.

There is no issue about our relationship with the United States historically but we do have to keep it in the historical context. That relationship has been extremely friendly but it has also had its frictions.

When Prime Minister Pearson said back in the sixties "We are not going to be involved in the Vietnam War. You're wrong about that", our relationship was very frosty for a while. In fact, it became quite physical when the president of the United States, Mr. Johnson at that time, literally assaulted our prime minister over that particular issue.

When I hear today just how bad the relationship has become, has it become that bad? I do not think so and we certainly hope it will not.

I come from a background where my father was an American. My oldest sister and youngest brother are Americans. They reside in the United States. The motion mentions negative comments and that we have to be careful as members of the House. I have some support in terms of sentiment for that and I have some questions on that part of the motion. My sister and brother would be very upset with me if I did not say how hurt we would be if comments were made about our legitimacy, whether our parents were married, and that comment that we heard.

I am also very concerned about other comments coming from the other side which I regard as anti-Canadian. When I hear, for instance, the Leader of the Opposition use the term "cowardly", or the staff of the Premier of Ontario in a written press release use the term "coward" to address the government's position, I cannot support that either. I have to speak out against that. That type of language on either side is offensive, uncalled for and unwarranted.

• (1735)

To go to the very essence of this motion, it is about the U.S.-led coalition accomplishing its mission and we as a country expressing our hope that it is able to do so. Our party does not support that and we will, for that reason particularly, be opposed to the motion. The war is an illegal war. The coalition that is in Iraq now has no justification in being there.

We talk in part of the motion about casualties and wanting to limit them. The quickest way we could limit them is to impose, as Russia and a number of other countries have proposed, an immediate ceasefire. I have a very personal connection with regard to casualties. I was in Iraq about six months ago. I visited a school which was about two blocks from the market that was bombed in the first week. I do not know it but I live with the thought that some of the children I saw were some of those children who were killed in that bombing incident. How many other children may die or have died as a result of this incursion?

We needed to proceed with the UN sponsored inspections. It was working, as much as we will hear from some other elements that it was not, and for nothing else than it would not produce those civilian casualties we have seen.

We have been friends of the United States and we have been its ally in any number of other cases, as it has been with us in any number of other cases. Because it is our friend and ally we have the moral responsibility to say when it is wrong, as have a good number of its citizens. Its incursion into Iraq is wrong.

Government Orders

We have a similar responsibility to the United Kingdom. We told it in the Suez crisis back in the fifties that it was wrong, that we would not be there with it and that it was not justified under international law or under the charter of the UN. It is the same message. It is one of principle. It is a principle in which the country should have every pride. We should be able to say the citizens of Canada that in our foreign affairs we will look to multilateralism and the UN as methods of resolving these types of disputes. War, as the UN charter tells us, is always the last resort. We have to tell the administration in the U.S. that the principles it is enunciating of pre-emptive strike is one we cannot support; that we will never support.

There are a good number of elements in the motion that our party cannot support. It comes back to what we agreed to back in the middle part of March when the Prime Minister stood up and said that we would not be involved in the war. That is the principle on which we are standing.

• (1740)

Mr. Greg Thompson: Mr. Speaker, on this most important debate, sponsored by the government, it does not have a quorum in the House of Commons. I ask you to check whether there is quorum.

And the bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Order, please. We do have quorum. Questions or comments, the hon. member for Windsor West.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question for the member relates to the concerns I have heard about the situation with unilateralism as opposed to working together at the United Nations.

I had the chance to go to Washington a week ago and I talked to congressmen and women who opposed the U.S. pre-emptive strike in Iraq. They identified the concern of precedence setting and potentially the issue of the United Nations being undermined in the future for other potential conflicts.

The motion does not identify the United Nations at all in its actual delivery. Does the member feel that undermines the United Nations and, more important, does this open us up to any potential situations in the future that might make a unique turn in history with the United Nations itself?

Mr. Joe Comartin: Mr. Speaker, I guess there are two parts to the question. Let me deal with the principle of pre-emptive strikes that underlie the doctrine that has been enunciated by the Bush administration.

The real hope I have is that at some point in the next administration in the United States that principle or right to pre-emptive strikes will be repudiated by a subsequent administration. If it is not and this becomes its doctrine, not only for this continent but for the whole of the planet, that does not bode well for peace and security in the world.

On the second issue of the role of the United Nations, I very much would have liked to address that. I just ran out of time. There is no question the final part of the motion dealing with the whole issue of reconstruction is glaringly blank about mentioning the United Nations.

As a party, it is our position that the United Nations should be involved, not only in the humanitarian effort that will be required to assist Iraq to get back on its feet, but also to assist, given what at this point seems the inevitability of the government collapsing, and play a key role in assisting the Iraqi people to take control of their government for themselves, by themselves.

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member make reference to the fact the Prime Minister did not in his remarks today convey our very firm conviction that the United Nations must indeed be a part of reconstruction. I did not have time to get it but I can offer to read it to him afterwards and look forward to doing that.

He made it very clear that Canada is in support and in discussion right now with the United States, the U.K., the United Nations and other multilateral groups with regard to what we and others intend to do on reconstruction. That is key.

Knowing the hon. member as I do, I am sure he most likely omitted to mention it or perhaps was not in the House for that reference.

• (1745)

Mr. Joe Comartin: Mr. Speaker, I was not in the House for the comment by the Prime Minister but I watched it on television, so I did hear it. My response has to be, if the government is serious, why is it not in the resolution in the final point? I say that in light of the history of this governing party over the last six or eight months as we watched it vacillate back and forth.

Initially the government said that it would only support any activity in Iraq if the UN sponsored it. Then we heard comments from some of the ministers, and even the Prime Minister on one occasion, that maybe we could go in without UN sponsorship. Ultimately, it decided not to and I again give it full credit for that.

The member will have to appreciate my reluctance to be totally convinced by the simple statement we had from the Prime Minister this morning.

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC): Mr. Speaker, I want to get the member's opinion on the change of heart by the Prime Minister on many occasions on this very issue. I am talking about regime change. The member knows full well that the Prime Minister stood in the House two weeks ago and supported regime change without any question. One day later he completely reversed his decision on that. Liberals do not like to hear that but it is on the record.

Why would the Prime Minister completely flip-flop on an issue as important as that?

Mr. Joe Comartin: Mr. Speaker, as a lawyer, if that was in a courtroom, it would be ruled out because I would have to try to put myself in the Prime Minister's mind.

The question is well taken that there has been this vacillation. I do not think his support of regime change is quite as strong as the member suggests, but the issue is still there. How solid is the Liberal government with regard to its role in this?

Private Members' Business

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the limited time left it is very difficult to choose which argument to develop in this very important debate.

I would like to bring to the attention of my colleagues to an editorial which appeared in none other than the *New York Times*. This newspaper has been frequently quoted today by the members who have spoken on behalf of the official opposition. The editorial appears under the title "War and the Ruins of Diplomacy". It makes a number of worthwhile points. I will quote only one paragraph because of the absence of adequate time. It states:

—America's current isolation began long before the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. From the administration's first days, it turned away from internationalism and the concerns of its European allies by abandoning the Kyoto Protocol on global warming and withdrawing America's signature from the treaty establishing the International Criminal Court. Russia was bluntly told to accept America's withdrawal from the Antiballistic Missile Treaty and the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization into the territory of the former Soviet Union. In the Middle East, Washington shortsightedly stepped back from the worsening spiral of violence between Israel and the Palestinians, ignoring the pleas of Arab, Muslim and European countries. If other nations resist American leadership today, part of the reason lies in this unhappy history.

This is an interesting overall background painted by an editorial writer in the *New York Times*, who went on to state:

The American-sponsored Security Council resolution that was withdrawn...had firm support from only four of the council's 15 members and was opposed by major European powers, like France, Germany and Russia.

These elements somehow have a bearing in the evolution of events that we have witnessed in the last few weeks, namely, that there is a body of opinion in the United States that disagrees with the White House. There is also a criticism being levelled in relation to the handling of this whole issue at the Security Council on the part of the White House administration.

Last Friday I was struck by the fact that the employment figures released in Canada show a full time employment increase by some 23,000 jobs in March, which is a remarkable achievement considering the time of the year and the war in Iraq. By contrast, the economy south of the border showed a loss of 108,000 jobs. Evidently the war is beginning to have an impact on the U.S. economy.

If certain Alliance strategists on the opposition side and big business leaders had any good sense, instead of urging Canada to join in the war and further integrate with the U.S. economy, they would support Canada's position and urge a resumption of talks at the Security Council, for instance, to seek alternatives to Canada's huge dependence on one economy, as is the case now, by strengthening our economic bridges with Europe and Asia.

Today Canada's economy, by all accounts, is healthy. By contrast, the U.S. economy is not. Which is the model then that the official opposition and big business prefer? Canada has opted in favour of the United Nations Security Council and multilateralism. Does the official opposition want to replace the United Nations with the White House administration? This is a common question that I would dearly like to have answered by the official opposition spokespersons.

•(1750)

Last week at the council of Europe an important resolution was passed. I will relay to the House the comments made by that assembly in a resolution that was passed by a two-thirds majority. In one paragraph it states:

The Assembly notes that the great majority of the international community had opposed the military intervention at this stage, which was favoured by only four of the fifteen members of the United Nations Security Council.

Mr. Speaker, may I call it 6 o'clock?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Yes, and I wish to inform the hon. member for Davenport that he still has 15 minutes left in his speech if he wishes to use it when Motion No. 15 makes its way back to the House.

[Translation]

It being 5:52 p.m., the House will now proceed to private members' business as indicated on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

PARLIAMENTARY EMPLOYMENT AND STAFF RELATIONS ACT

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP) moved that Bill C-419, an act to amend the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act (members' staff), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to debate second reading of Bill C-419. I introduced this bill on two previous occasions, but unfortunately in both instances it died on the Order Paper. I hope that all members representing all caucuses in the House of Commons will see fit to engage consideration of what is a matter of simple justice.

This bill proposes to amend the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act to ensure that staff of senators and members of the House of Commons who serve them in the capacity of member, leader, House leader or whip, would enjoy the benefit of being permitted, if they so choose, to organize a union, to belong to a union, and to enjoy the benefits of collective bargaining.

I do not need to tell members that this is a set of rights and privileges that is considered fundamental in a modern, democratic society such as Canada. In fact, we worked long and hard to ensure that those rights are protected and advanced for all working people.

Private Members' Business

I must say that for me it was a revelation. I was astounded when I arrived on Parliament Hill in 1995 to discover that only the New Democratic Party caucus had voluntarily recognized the organization of its staff on Parliament Hill in what is known as PASS, the Parliamentary Association of Support Staff. It was organized in the early eighties and not only were they the only staff on Parliament Hill working for members of Parliament or senators who enjoyed the benefit of that organization, but in fact they did not enjoy the full benefits of collective bargaining. It remains true to this day that neither the employer or the employee at this point in time enjoy the full recognition of a union or an employer that is engaged in a collective bargaining process and has obligations that go with that under the current legislation that governs this House.

As I said, it is a matter of simple justice. What these changes propose to do is alter the current legislation, the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act, so that parliamentary staff would not be prevented from organizing and negotiating with their employer through a collective bargaining unit.

I know there are members who have expressed concerns about what this would mean in the instance of confidential staff and political staff. This proposal would cover staff in a minister's office who would be hired under the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act but would not cover staff in a minister's office who would be hired under the Public Service Employment Act.

The bill proposes that staff working not just for ordinary members but for caucuses and for parliamentary committees would have extended to them the normal rights and protections that would be available to the majority of Canadian workers.

● (1755)

Let me outline what the bill would do. First, it would change the definition of employee in the act to exclude persons who are employees under section 2 of the Public Service Staff Relations Act, essentially confidential and political staff.

Second, it would change the definition of employer in the act to include members of the House and Senate who have staff to assist their work as members in Ottawa or in their constituency, to assist members who are ministers, and to assist members in their role as leaders, House leaders, whips of recognized parties, and staff who serve the caucus of a recognized party.

Third, the bill would prohibit the employer from engaging in lockouts and would provide penalties for those causing lockouts. In so doing, Bill C-419 would not affect any provision of the Parliament of Canada Act that currently forbids strikes. It would create an even-handedness or a level playing field in that regard.

Finally, the bill would cause the entire act, parts I, II and III, to come into force on a date chosen by cabinet or upon royal assent of the private member's bill, whichever occurs first.

In November 2002, the Federal Court of Appeal ruled that members of Parliament are required to abide by basic human rights legislation. In a unanimous decision, the court rejected the argument put forward by the House of Commons that parliamentary privilege somehow exempted MPs from the provisions of the Canadian Human Rights Act. It would be accurate to say that Bill C-419, which I am introducing for debate this evening, would compliment

that important court ruling by providing that the vast majority of Parliament Hill employees would enjoy some of the labour rights enjoyed by other Canadian workers.

When I arrived in Ottawa in 1995 as leader but without a seat, I was astounded to discover that employees of members of caucuses and staff of ministers at the constituency level were not confidential or political staff, and were effectively prohibited from forming a union.

One might ask how it is then that employees of the New Democratic Party caucus, as far back as the early eighties, did in fact put in place an employees' collective bargaining structure. It did so only because of one of the important principles, and I would be prepared to say *raison d'être*, of the NDP which is to ensure that workers enjoy the right to organize and to bargain collectively.

In that regard, the New Democratic Party caucus entered into a voluntary recognition that first established the Parliamentary Association of Support Staff which has evolved over the years with the full support and appreciation of the NDP caucus. This was not just the simple justice of having workers enjoy those rights that are enjoyed by the majority of Canadian workers, but that the orderly collective bargaining process was a better relationship between employer and employee. The PASS organization evolved into a much more fully functioning union and for all practical purposes, except for the lack of support that exists under the legislation governing employees on the Hill, it has without a doubt created a more positive and harmonious working relationship.

Why should employees who serve for many years in this place have no orderly provisions whereby they can receive fair increments in their pay despite the fact that we know that as a result of recent legislation there are automatic increments in the budgets of members through their MOBs?

● (1800)

We know now that as a result of recent legislation there are automatically budgetary increments in the budgets of members, through the MOBs of members. Let me say from the employers' side that this is an issue should there be a situation where there may be a dispute, which one would hope to avoid but nevertheless that is not always the reality in a workplace, in which an employer and an employee in fact need some of the benefits of the supports that go with the collective bargaining process through the broader system and through legislation such as the amendments to the legislation that I am introducing tonight. In fact, the opportunity for the employer and the employee to avail themselves of mediation services or of arbitration is simply denied to the employer and the employee alike. This can create severe unfairness and injustices.

It really is a matter of simple justice. Although there is some apprehension, I understand, from some members who have expressed their opposition to moving in this direction, I think it is past time for us to recognize that fair treatment of our employees surely requires that they be accorded and extended the basic rights that are available to the majority of Canadian workers.

Private Members' Business

I ask members to consider this from the point of view of the employer, to consider it from the point of view of what kind of precedent it sets and what kind of model it is for members of Parliament who have it within their realm of opportunity and I would say obligation to improve the legislative provisions and protections for those who serve us so ably and so capably here on Parliament Hill and who are denied those very basic rights.

I look forward to hearing from other members and other caucuses as we move forward to improve both the legislative and the working environment for those who are employed here on the Hill, both by senators and by members of Parliament.

• (1805)

Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for introducing the bill and persisting with it. It has been a long journey to get the House to pronounce itself on the bill.

I would like to indicate to the member right off the bat that I intend to vote in favour of the bill. I believe that the principle is one that merits debate at the committee stage. It merits some attention and some detailed work, because there may be aspects of what the member proposes that perhaps should be modified. I think that the notion put forward here is one that has the merit that I explained and it deserves attention and closer scrutiny at committee.

I believe it touches indirectly also a very vital issue: that of defining privilege and how it relates to the legislation that we in this House and senators in the other House pass and which eventually becomes the law of the land. We have seen too many incidents of situations where there is a conflict between this legislation and questions of privilege.

[Translation]

I am personally involved in a case connected with the Official Languages Act and the House of Commons, the Quigley case. We know there was another case involving both the House of Commons and another Canadian law.

I hope that the hon. members will take advantage of this opportunity to refer it to committee for more thorough debate.

[English]

I would like to invite the member who is sponsoring the bill to reflect also on the possibility that, indeed, should the bill not pass—

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but there are only five minutes for questions and comments and I want to give another hon. member a chance to ask a question of the hon. member for Halifax.

Mr. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, may I finish my sentence?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Yes, very briefly.

[English]

Mr. Mauril Bélanger: There will be a need to define privilege and how it relates to Canadian law.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the support that the member has already indicated for the bill to go to committee. I remain absolutely open to the possibility that there could be some

suggested improvements. I think it would be an important step to move it to the committee level and engage all members, all caucuses, in the debate.

I think there is the need to clarify really what is intended by privilege. I must say I was absolutely horrified when I heard some suggestion that the House of Commons, on behalf of all members, I guess, was going to appeal an important decision that was made in which it was made quite clear that privilege was not intended to allow members to evade some very basic human rights.

At the same time, I agree that there could indeed be the need to get some clarification of what privilege does mean. I think it was clearly understood as a protection for the absolute freedom of speech that needed to go on, but surely it is not to be able to discriminate against people on the basis of race or discriminate against them in their employment status and the rights and privileges that they should enjoy. I think that should be done. It could be done through a referral to the Supreme Court. That is a fairly customary thing to do.

I think what is very important here is for us to take up our basic responsibilities as employers and also, hopefully, as members of Parliament who should be exemplary in how we deal with our employees, not just sort of grudgingly acknowledging that people should enjoy basic rights that exist for most other Canadian workers.

• (1810)

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I find this bill very interesting in itself. Still, I think it is very general — it just gives very general guidelines.

I am wondering if the hon. member has foreseen the details: that is my first question. Second, with whom are the employees going to negotiate? At present, the employees are paid out of public funds, even though they are our employees. What position would we occupy in negotiations in such a case?

[English]

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Mr. Speaker, let me say again I think that there is no absolute hard and fast model or formula for this. It is clear that in the instance of the New Democratic Party staff here on the Hill and in our constituency offices they form a bargaining unit and in fact are affiliated. They are very proud of this. We as employers are very proud of this. They are affiliated with the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada in this country, really an outstanding union. They are tough bargainers and good for them. They have won some major improvements in the working conditions and good for them. That is why one has a union.

Let me say that the way in which this could be organized would be the subject of debate. There could be strenuous arguments for there being separate bargaining units from one caucus to the next because it would not be correct to assume that the community of interests is identical across all of the political parties.

Those are details that can be worked out. I think the discussion that could go on in debate and then referring it to committee is an important step in that direction.

Private Members' Business

[*Translation*]

Ms. Carole-Marie Allard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to take part in the debate on Bill C-419, an act to amend the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act (members' staff).

First, I think it is appropriate that this bill is being considered during private members' business, and it is not my intention to seem skeptical about the changes nor negative about unions, god forbid. I want to congratulate the member for bringing this issue forward again for debate in the House of Commons.

In my humble opinion and the opinion of my government, this bill would have a direct impact on how parliamentarians work and run their offices. It is, therefore, reasonable for us to discuss these issues in a non-partisan manner, which does not mean that we cannot try to come to some agreement.

Since the legislation was enacted in 1986, the government has considered many points raised by this bill. It must be said that no solutions were implemented because parliamentarians were unable to agree on these points.

Bill C-419, which the House is currently considering, proposes three major changes to the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act, passed in 1986.

First, part I of the legislation would be amended to allow employees of members and senators to negotiate collective agreements. These provisions would apply to Hill and riding office staff, as well as caucus employees.

Each member and senator would be considered an employer by his or her employees. Hill staff would then be subject to the same act as employees of the House of Commons, Senate and Library of Parliament.

Under part I of the act, staff of Parliament could appeal to the Public Service Staff Relations Board, for arbitration and settlement of grievances.

Second, the bill would add a new provision prohibiting lockouts by employers. This would apply to the House of Commons, the Senate, the Library of Parliament and each member and senator as employers. Furthermore, this bill includes sanctions for employers who resort to lockouts.

Third, this bill would ensure that parts II and III of the act would come into force. Part II sets standards for hours of work, salaries and leave, and integrates part III into the Canada Labour Code.

Part III sets occupational health and safety standards, and also integrates part II of the Canada Labour Code. These two parts, parts II and III, apply to staff of members of Parliament, the Senate and the Library of Parliament.

Even though the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act was enacted on June 27, 1986, parts II and III—which deal with health and safety standards—never came into force because of concerns expressed by parliamentarians from both chambers that these provisions should not apply to parliamentary staff.

One of the concerns of parliamentarians who did not want parts II and III to come into force was that these provisions have financial and operational consequences.

Let us refer to the financial consequences first. Bill C-419 could provoke considerable expenses due to occupational health and safety standards set out in parts II and III. The new provisions that would allow for collective bargaining could also have significant financial repercussions for members and senators.

More important still, there would also be possible repercussions from parts II and III on the independence of members of Parliament and on their privileges. For example, employees could refuse to carry out certain tasks, or claim that certain jobs are dangerous. We can immediately imagine the consequences, which would prevent the House from sitting.

•(1815)

The work of members' offices would be disrupted. Among other things, government inspectors would have access to Parliament Hill and to members' offices.

As parliamentarians, we must ensure that our privileges are not unduly jeopardized. We must find the right balance between maintaining these privileges and respecting the interests of our employees. The House of Commons, the Senate and the Library of Parliament have managed to solve labour disputes informally. Yet, employees benefit from protections similar to those provided under the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act. This act has the benefit of not breaching our privileges.

As parliamentarians, we must ensure that we fulfill our duties as employers in such a way as to provide our own employees with good working arrangements.

The purpose of this bill concerns each and every one of us. I am pleased to see that we can deal with this topic in a non-partisan manner. In the end, the government recognizes the concerns expressed on this matter by parliamentarians over the years. For this reason, it does not wish to move forward with this bill without consensus among parliamentarians.

The most appropriate compromise, and I do say compromise, rather than solution, would be for the Board of Internal Economy to create a parallel non-legislative structure with the same purposes as those set out in this bill, but without the problems that would arise under Bill C-419, introduced by the member.

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thought the Canadian Alliance would be speaking on this bill.

I would like to begin by congratulating the hon. member for Halifax for this initiative. I think that the reason this is being debated at this time is that the situation is a debatable one. We must see whether any improvements can be made. At any rate, it must be discussed.

Private Members' Business

If I am reading correctly, however, we are dealing with employees who do not have the right to strike yet could be locked out. We agree with that part of the bill, where the hon. member has changed the wording to the effect that those who do not have the right to strike may not be locked out. This, we feel is fair and just.

This bill:

—amends the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act to ensure that staff of members of the Senate and the House of Commons, who serve them in the capacity of member, leader, house leader or whip, will not be prevented from being included in a bargaining unit.

Or in another words, a union.

More specifically, the bill addresses:

caucus staff, parliamentary committee staff, and staff in a minister's office who are hired under the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act.

Staff in ministers' offices who are hired under the Public Service Employment Act are excluded from this bill.

Moreover, the bill forbids lockouts by employers of their employees and provides fines of up to \$5,000 for those causing lockouts. That is nothing to be sneezed at.

The reason we are discussing this today is that the situation does exist. There are those who are dissatisfied, and the hon. member is right in pointing this out. On the other hand, judging from discussions with members of my party, there are many of us who do not support the bill as currently drafted. Some would, but most would not.

I will give their reasons, and will speak on their behalf as well as my own.

When there is an election, a party can end up with 54 MPs and so we hire staff. Things go along well for four years and then there is another election. We end up with only 20 MPs in the House, so what happens to those staff? Are we obliged to hire the ones with the most seniority? Are we obliged to take them for our offices?

That is of concern to me, because that is not how it should work. We have no control over these things. I know that in my party, at present, each member is the critic for an issue. I am the critic for labour, and if a staff person whose specialty is the environment was assigned to me, that would not work. I must be able to gather around me people who are knowledgeable on the issue I am responsible for and who are prepared to develop their knowledge and skills in that area.

Another concern that was raised was that the staff in our constituency and Ottawa offices do not necessarily perform the same duties. How can a job description be developed? It is impossible to list the duties of a political employee, because they vary. Say an election is called. An employee, if unionized, could tell me, "Elections are not part of my duties. I am not working past 5 p.m."

There is this whole issue. In politics, we are politically involved, and our staff along with us. There is no doubt that all duties could never be identified. It is simply impossible because they vary. In the summer, these people are not as busy and work on other things. Come an election, there is an entirely different set of duties. This is true for everyone.

The third concern that my colleagues raised was about which union we would be involved with. Will there be a single union for all House of Commons employees? That cannot work. There is also the whole issue of confidentiality and political parties.

● (1820)

We are discussing it here in the House, and we will come back to it in the second hour, but for now, I think we have to seriously consider going through the Board of Internal Economy, as the hon. member suggested earlier. We must sit down and try to establish some parameters.

There is the issue of salary ceilings; for example, you will be able to go up to a certain amount, but there is no base salary for our employees. Perhaps it would be possible, through a committee, to decide that there would be a base, so that we would be providing at least a minimum income to employees.

There is also the question of working conditions. We could try to find a way for our employees to be happy and have decent working conditions. I think it would also be appropriate for employees, if they were really poorly treated, to have the possibility of lodging a complaint with some body other than a union. It is important that we be able to help them, that we help people get ahead. I know that happens on Parliament Hill. So we must find a formula, other than a union, that makes it possible to make such changes.

There is one other point that I see as potentially controversial, and that is the whole question of the budget. I have a budget assigned to me by the House of Commons. I can tell you that 75% to 80% of my budget is used for employee salaries. But if a union were to decide at some point to force my hand and say, "You are going to raise the salaries of your staff by such and such an amount," I would not have enough money to do that. I do not control my own budget: the House allocates it.

There is a problem of logic in all this. If we want all staff members to be very well paid, there must be a specific budget for employee salaries, that budget must be used for no other purpose, and employees must be well paid. But I do not see a union coming to tell me, "Your budget is no longer good enough: you have to raise employee salaries," forcing me to spend 90% of my budget on salaries. I will not be able to cope; it will not work. It could lead to layoffs and long-lasting disputes.

I think that other resources, other ways of helping our employees, must be found. It is important to respect politics, since we are politicians. I think that it is essential to show respect here. We must ensure proper working conditions. I do, for my employees. They are well paid and work normal hours. If they work overtime, they get time off. We agree on this. I think that we are mature enough to do this.

I am unable to manage my riding office as I do my office in Ottawa. It is impossible. I do not see how these people could be unionized in the same way. I think that other solutions must be found.

Private Members' Business

I congratulate my colleague on her initiative. I think this is a very broad bill, and it opens the door to many possibilities. I think it must be debated. I invite her, in the future, to better inform us of her real intentions, because things are not clear. We are looking at a broad picture and things are very unclear. I would like to have more information.

At the same time, I would like her to consider the possibility, given all the instruments and tools of the House of Commons, of perhaps taking a different approach. But it is essential to ensure, through the Board of Internal Economy or by another committee, that our employees are well paid and well treated on the Hill.

● (1825)

[*English*]

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to say a few words on Bill C-419, an act to amend the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act.

The purpose of the bill is to ensure that staff of members of the Senate and the House of Commons who serve the members in their capacity as member, leader, House leader or whip will not be prevented from being in a bargaining unit. Simply put, the bill affords collective bargaining rights to political staff. It would essentially turn political staff into quasi-civil servants. That is a move with which I think our party would have some very fundamental problems. I would have some fundamental problems with it as well.

This is not the general course I would normally pursue, because I generally support legislation that gives full collective bargaining rights, including the right to strike, to workers in the vast majority of situations. However, political staff are an entirely different kettle of fish. I do not know how it could possibly work when we consider the hours of work that political staff put in and the flexibility that is required of the political staff in putting in overtime and what have you. I cannot see how it could possibly work.

Political staff are not civil servants. Neither are they simply management level civil servants who are exempt from a given bargaining unit. Political staff are simply that, political staff. Their relationship to the member is essentially personal and political. The nature of that relationship is as varied as the number of members in the House of Commons. How could we possibly have one set of rules that would apply to everyone? In this particular instance I think it is fair to say that one size does not fit all.

Members hire a political staffer for a whole bunch of different reasons. There is no criteria set out to hire a political staffer. Sometimes a political staffer is hired because he worked on an election campaign with us, or he is a friend who has a talent we recognize in one particular area. He may not fit the criteria set out in a job description and it might be very difficult to fit him into a certain job description.

One of the ways in which the uniqueness of the relationship between a member and a staffer is acknowledged in the House is by the vacation pay a member's staff receives on an annual basis. That is in recognition of the fact that political staff often work long hours. They work very odd hours. They have no provision for overtime and

have no realistic expectation of the usual annual vacation leave that applies in the case of a civil servant.

One thing which struck me as strange was that temporary House committee staff are excluded from collective bargaining rights but they are lumped in with political staff to acquire those rights under Bill C-419. To me that is mixing apples and oranges. House and Senate committees serve all political parties, and committee staff, be they temporary or full time, are essentially civil servants. Therefore I cannot see them as being in the same category as political staff as far as collective bargaining rights are concerned.

● (1830)

I want to congratulate the member from the NDP for taking the initiative. Maybe it requires some debate but I cannot help but say that perhaps the relationship between the NDP caucus and its staff operates a little differently from the rest of the political world with which I am familiar.

I have been in political life since 1979 and this is the first occasion in which I have seen a serious proposal to significantly alter the collective bargaining rights of political staff. Of course, they have no collective bargaining rights at the moment.

Political staff are not rank and file civil servants. They are not public service management staff. They occupy a unique position in the governmental spectrum and one which I feel is not suitable for the stated intentions of the bill.

Regrettably, I do not believe we can support the bill. Again I want to congratulate the member and say that it probably requires some further debate, but on the surface of it, I think we would have some difficulty in granting collective bargaining rights to political staff. It just does not seem to fit.

● (1835)

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I was in my office watching these exciting debates on my television while I was working on things when somebody said they did not know whether anybody from the Alliance would be talking to this. I thought I had better get in here and express our opinion.

I have some pretty good ideas and I have quite a bit of experience in the area of staff, hiring staff, relationships, collective agreements, all those things. I have some pretty strong ideas about the bill and I am very honoured to say a few things about it.

I believe that where there is a lot of staff, the only practical way of hiring that staff is with a collective agreement.

When I worked at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, we had 750 instructors. It was quite impractical to hire each one on an individual contract because of the diversity that was required in the different areas, the obvious problems of favouritism and that type of thing. A collective agreement was very much in order.

I was the union steward for a while, and the president of the staff association, and the president of the local of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees. There were many times when I looked at the collective agreement and said that in a way one size does not fit all. Just as any woman would say when it comes to buying pantyhose that one size does not fit all, this is true in collective agreements as well.

Private Members' Business

We can have an agreement that says someone who has a certain amount of education and experience gets a certain salary and someone who is required to work from 8 in the morning until 4:30 every day gets one hour for lunch.

At the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology we taught classes. Our collective agreement said that we should all have one hour for lunch starting between 11:45 and 12 and ending one and one-quarter hours later. A person who started lunch at 11:45 would be back on the job at one and a person who started at 12 would be back by 1:15. It did not fit because a lot of us had classes starting at 12:15. When I was there all the classes started at 15 minutes after the hour and went for 55 minutes. Sometimes there were double classes which were basically two 55-minute periods.

We had some problems trying to get that through the collective agreement process. Some individuals said it was not a problem, that they would take their lunch hour from 11 to 12. I was one of those guys who was compliant. I remember one time in my schedule my lunch hour was from 8 to 9:15 in the morning. That is how I got the shape I have now; it started then, from eating at irregular hours. Others said that no, they would only take their lunch hour at the time the collective agreement stated.

What happened was that those of us who were compliant ended up teaching during the noon hour. Those who said that they were standing by the agreement got their lunch hour during the prescribed hours.

It worked out anyway because people were able to work around the system. But it was very difficult because of the variations in individual cases.

Then we had instructors who taught in other areas. I was in the academic department, but others taught in other areas. It was very difficult to come up with one collective agreement that fit the needs of a mathematics or physics instructor as opposed to someone who was teaching medical lab technology, as opposed to someone else who was teaching the paramedics, as opposed to someone else who was teaching heavy duty diesel mechanics. There were many variations.

• (1840)

Somehow the big union was not able to get its head around our particular needs there. We landed up spending almost as much time fighting with our union as we did with our employer, with the result that things really deteriorated.

The reason I am saying this is because in this particular environment we all have some very special needs. I strongly believe that it is absolutely important for us to be able to hire people to work strange hours if that is required. If we have people who work extraordinarily long hours, it would be fair for us to have the flexibility to pay them a little more, and perhaps others who work the more stringent hours, for whatever reasons, to get paid a little less. However, each one of us must be able to do that. It is important to provide a specific work plan for each individual in this environment because we have a relatively small number of employees.

I want to reiterate that when there are a large number of employees, even when I think back to NAIT, I really do not know how else we could have done it. It would have been difficult to start

saying that we would have 750 individual contracts. It would have been an administrative nightmare. But here we have a leader of the party who, with his or her chief of staff, has made an arrangement for a staff of between about 50 and 150 people. I think the government probably has quite a few more than that. That is a manageable size. That is not out of capacity at all for individual contracts.

I reject the hypothesis that unless it is done by collective agreement that it will not be fair. The onus is on all of us, as individual members of Parliament and as directors in our respective parties, to ensure that the working conditions, the employment package, and everything there is fair.

When I was first elected way back in 1993, almost 10 years ago, I would have liked a few more statistics. We received this little sheet that said we could hire our staff and we could not pay them more than a certain amount. I had no idea as a neophyte what I should pay my staff. What were the standards and norms? I would have liked a little more actual help in that regard to say what the norm was and what members of Parliament were generally paying. I would have liked means and standard deviations. That may have been as useful as ranges of salaries based on experience and so on. That statistic should be available without divulging individual information.

That would have been helpful, but going to a collective agreement in this particular environment is not a good fit at all. The concept is good. We must ensure that we are fair. However, I reject the idea that unless there is a collective agreement guaranteeing the rights of the employees that they are not going to get them.

We all know the horror stories. I was involved in our staff association. I was the president and the chief guy that dealt with problems, and I dealt with problems continuously. That was in an environment where there was a collective agreement. We are going to have problems either way.

Perhaps what we ought to do is have a better liaison system where staff can go to their party bosses and say that one of our MPs is doing this and could we look at that. There might be a system there, but I would not support this particular initiative even though I do strongly believe in fairness to staff.

As an employer in charge of only three staffers right now, I have an obligation. If I expect loyalty from my staff, I must show them loyalty as well and ensure that they get paid adequately, that their working conditions are fair, and that they can look after their families if that is their need. I insist that we keep that flexibility and so with regret I will not support this particular bill.

• (1845)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to take part in this debate on Bill C-419, an act to amend the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act. I will speak primarily to the provision in the bill that covers the coming into force of parts II and III of the legislation.

This provision, clause 4, changes the provision of the act concerning the coming into force. The Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act was passed by Parliament and received royal assent on June 27, 1986. Nevertheless, parts II and III of that act, the ones dealing with employment standards and health and safety standards, have never come into force.

Part II, establishing the obligations related to normal working hours, salaries and holidays, incorporated part III of the Canada Labour Code.

Part III of the act, setting health and safety standards, incorporated part II of the Canada Labour Code.

Both parts of the legislation were intended to apply to staff in the House of Commons, the Senate and the Library of Parliament as well as the staff of senators and members of parliament.

It may seem odd that they have never come into effect, since the bill has been law for 17 years. The government acknowledged that the unions, as well as a number of employees and members, have called for these provisions to be applied.

The government has acted upon their requests by addressing this matter and consulting parliamentarians and other stakeholders. It did not move on the matter after that consultation because of a lack of consensus. As well, the government feels that the requirements of the law are properly respected, albeit informally.

The standards imposed by part II are already in collective agreements. As well, parliamentary employers respect the spirit of the law as far as health and safety is concerned. In many cases, they go beyond what the law requires.

For instance, the House of Commons has struck a joint health and safety committee made up of representatives of management and labour.

The hiring of MPs' staff is governed by the regulations of the Board of Internal Economy, and employee benefits are set out in the directives of the *Manual of Allowances and Services*, which apply to parliamentarians in their capacity as employees.

Two main concerns were raised by members of Parliament concerning the coming into effect of parts II and III.

First, part II requirements might have financial and operational implications for MPs and senators.

Each parliamentarian is aware that we must carry out our activities within the framework of the limited funds made available for staff.

Second, the coming into effect of part III might impact upon the independence of members of Parliament and breach their privileges.

For example, employees might refuse to work if they deemed their working conditions to be dangerous, and this might be considered a matter of privilege if it prevented the House or its members from sitting.

Part III would give government inspectors access to the parliamentary precinct, in particular the MPs' and senators' offices, without the authorization of the person concerned or of the Speaker of the House.

Adjournment Debate

As parliamentarians, we need to act with caution when laws are proposed which might conflict with parliamentary privileges.

As I have already noted, parts II and III apply the provisions of the Canada Labour Code to parliamentary staff. Yet that code was never designed to apply to the legislative branch.

It does not in any way take into consideration the distinct nature of the House of Commons or the Senate, rights and parliamentary immunity of MPs, or the constitutional independence of the House from the executive branch.

I would point out that the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act has not undergone a comprehensive parliamentary review since 1986.

● (1850)

It is now proposed in Bill C-419 that parts II and III come into force without our first ascertaining that they remain as relevant as they were 17 years ago.

As I just said, perhaps we should consider further amendments to the act before enacting parts II and III, to ensure that they do not conflict with parliamentary privileges.

We should make sure that all the amendments made to the Canada Labour Code since 1986 actually do apply to parliamentary staff.

That having been said, this bill only changes the coming into force of the act and does not make any substantive changes to parts II and III.

To conclude, it was in response to concerns expressed by parliamentarians that the government held off enacting parts II and III.

The working conditions of our staff matter greatly to us, but I believe that the House was able to settle the matter informally, without breaching our privileges in the process.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise tonight and expand on a question I asked the Minister of Finance on February 26, 2003.

I will preface my remarks with the fact that municipal infrastructure is something that, in recent days, weeks and months, has fallen to the back as the nation is faced with other important issues. However, it is important that we do not forget this issue and that we continue to move forward. That is why tonight I have the pleasure to expand on my question.

Adjournment Debate

I was asking the finance minister about a comment made by the Minister of Transport. He introduced a plan that involved no new funds and described toll roads as an innovation. He described toll roads as the way for municipalities to recoup their finances because of the lack of infrastructure dollars from the federal government. The response I received from the government was that since 1993, when the Liberals had a \$42 billion deficit, it had put \$2 billion into infrastructure.

We have had surpluses over the last several years. We have seen less money going into infrastructure and that is my major concern. The last budget significantly failed municipalities. There is \$150 million available for infrastructure this year and it will only provide a mere pittance for what is required. After this year it will be \$300 million for the next 10 years.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has identified a \$57 billion infrastructure deficit. If we were to use that formula to address this deficit it would take until the year 2193 to actually reach that deficit.

The problem that we have affects everything from the investment in the short term to jobs and employment. More importantly, our national infrastructure must be able to compete with the world regardless of whether it is roads, waste water treatment, hard bridges, or infrastructure related to housing. Those things are important for our economy. The infrastructure has been underfunded for many years.

My concern is the lack of sincerity by the government to municipalities and the fact that it has simply played lip service to municipalities. A good example is the Prime Minister's task force on urban issues which states in the preamble:

Let us have the courage and the vision to take the next steps on our journey.

We then go to the throne speech which identified that municipalities needed to be encouraged and supported. We get to the budget and, lo and behold, everything drops off the map. We see a plan that does not have any type of merit for municipalities in the long term. It does not provide them the support and, more importantly, the ability to generate the actual projects that are desperately needed in their communities.

I would like to ask the following questions: How can the government continue to say that it is going to support municipalities when it is not providing them with any financial resources to do so? When will the government present a long, sustainable program that will empower them before we lose out on more investment strategies because we did not have the wherewithal to invest in them now?

• (1855)

Mr. Bryon Wilfert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, who I know had a distinguished career in municipal politics in the City of Windsor.

As a former municipal politician and a former president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, I want to emphasize very clearly that in 1983 the FCM proposed the national infrastructure program. It then lay dormant under the Conservatives until 1993, when this government picked it up.

We implemented the national infrastructure program. We placed \$2 billion on the table. As the hon. member knows, we leveraged that money with the provinces, the municipalities and indeed the private sector. Not to stop with that, in 1997 we renewed the program with another \$425 million, leveraging again, through the Canada Infrastructure Works Program, to stimulate over \$8.3 billion in municipal investment.

The hon. member said that this budget ignored cities. Not only did it not ignore cities, it went beyond what any government in the history of this country has done with regard to cities.

Let me quote the FCM's president from March 5: "FCM has enjoyed a long and productive relationship with the Government of Canada. Many specific initiatives come to mind. The first Canada Infrastructure Works Program in 1994, support for the homeless, renewed and expanded funding for affordable housing, the groundbreaking green municipal funds, which were recommended by the FCM, the creation of a caucus task force to look at the state of our cities, and the rural secretariat all testify to a record of collaboration with Canada's municipal governments". That is from the president of the FCM, John Schmal.

I point out to the hon. member that for years, when I was FCM president and before I was president, municipalities asked for a 10 year program in infrastructure and this government delivered. How can one suggest for a moment that we ignored cities in the last budget: homeless, health care, universities, R and D, research, infrastructure. Of course we have a down payment, as the minister said, on infrastructure. There is \$100 million this year and it will be increased every year, and we expect our provincial partners to come to the table. As that Ontario member knows, it is the provincial Government of Ontario that has not been at the table. One would have to ask why it was so silent on cities when it came to its budget. It was absolutely dead silent.

This government makes no apologies for our work with cities. We continue to work with our municipal colleagues. I will tell members that I am very proud, not only as a former FCM president but as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, to note that we have listened to cities. We are going to continue to do so.

With that member's help, we are going to make sure that even though cities are under section 92 of the Constitution, and are the creatures, a word I hate, of the provinces, we are going to work collaboratively with them because it is in the best interests of all Canadians.

I appreciate the member's question.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to counter some of the points the hon. member has noted as a result of his long history with municipalities.

I would like to point out that President Schmal also can be quoted on the budget. He said, "Today's budget does absolutely nothing to fulfill these promises". The budget has also been described as doomsday by other municipal leaders.

Adjournment Debate

I agree with the hon. member's assertion that the Province of Ontario has not provided adequate support for municipalities, but let us do the funding formula, with an example of \$2 billion, \$2 billion and \$2 billion. Because of provinces like Ontario putting caps on industrial, commercial and multi-residential, here is what happens. The senior level of government knows it has a responsibility because it steals the gasoline tax and does not put it back into roads. This will end up squeezing people on fixed incomes because provinces and municipalities will have to go to residential property owners, and seniors and other people on fixed income are going to pay a disproportionate amount. That means that residential people will pay for big business and industry and this government does not have the wherewithal to match that challenge in the face of a lack of support from a province.

• (1900)

Mr. Bryon Wilfert: Mr. Speaker, again quoting the president of the FCM to the Minister of Finance, "Faced with a \$57 billion infrastructure deficit, we were disappointed and said so". However, he goes on to say, "Since then we have noted your reference to the total funding representing only a down payment. We welcome this clarification".

The reality is that the FCM is prepared to work with this government. The reality is that if municipalities need more taxation authority, they need to go to their provincial counterparts, which have the ability to provide them with a hotel tax, a gas tax, whatever they happen to need. To suggest for a moment that one order of government should collect money from Canadians and then turn it over to another order of government, which will then be able spend it without any accountability, I have some difficulty with that. I had difficulty with that notion when I was at FCM and I still do.

I do believe that when it comes to infrastructure it is by leveraging dollars and working collaboratively with our municipal and provincial friends that we are going to solve the problem the member has raised.

THE BUDGET

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, since the Liberal government came to power in 1993, it has been overtaxing employers and employees through the employment insurance fund. In other words the premiums that employers and employees pay into the fund have exceeded, every year the Liberal government has been in power, the amount of money that the fund actually needed to operate. It has exceeded it to the tune of between \$5 billion and \$8 billion a year so that collectively over the years the Liberal government has been in power, employers and employees have overcontributed \$39 billion to the EI fund.

However, that money is not in the EI fund. That money has been diverted to the federal government's consolidated revenue fund. It has been spent on wasteful programs such as bilingualism, the firearms registry and \$8 billion a year in handouts through the Indian affairs department, to name a few examples.

That is an issue in and of itself, but on February 20, I brought up another issue with respect to employment insurance premiums. When a person leaves employment partway through the year and starts a new job, that person and the new employer begin contributing to the employment insurance fund through their

premiums all over again. In many instances a worker in the course of a year actually exceeds the EI contribution limit.

Employees at the end of the year on their taxes get the overpayment back, but the employers who collectively overpaid do not get their money back. That amount is \$750 million a year.

The federal government has been using excessive EI premiums to overtax employees and employers under the guise of employment insurance but is really diverting the money to the consolidated revenue fund. What it is doing here is a similar taxation by stealth. Most employers are not even aware that they are being overtaxed. How would they know whether or not an employee they had employed for a few months at the beginning of a fiscal year who had left that employment had overcontributed?

My point to the finance minister on February 20 was why did he in the recent budget not eliminate this taxation by stealth, this unfair tax grab that rips off employers? In many cases they are not even aware that it is taking place. The minister's response was that it would be difficult to contemplate what kind of system could be put in place to do this. If Canada Customs and Revenue Agency already knows how much the employee has overpaid, it is a simple matter to calculate how much the employer has overpaid.

That \$750 million is coming out of the pockets of business owners in Canada. It is the latest billion dollar boondoggle by the Liberal government and the finance minister. They are wasting money on questionable program spending but refuse to give back what clearly does not belong to them. The Liberals are picking the pockets of business owners who deserve to get their overpayment back so that it can be used for job creation and economic growth, the backbone of our economy.

The \$750 million annual overpayment rightfully belongs to the business owners that paid it. They deserve to get it back in the same manner as their employees do. The finance minister should do the right thing and put an immediate end to the federal government's shameless cash grab of payroll deduction overpayments.

• (1905)

Mr. Bryon Wilfert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I noted the hon. member's comments. I would first point out to the House that there is no separate EI fund. The Auditor General instructed the government of the day in 1986 to put it in consolidated revenue. The minister has announced that there will be a thorough review. In fact he set up a review panel to deal with EI, which will be reporting back in June.

Again the minister has been seized with this issue. As everyone knows, since the government came to power EI rates have continued to go down, and that is important to note. In 2004 it will be \$1.98.

Adjournment Debate

On the issue that the member raises with regard to overpayments, as we know employers are required to pay the first dollar for each employee in employment. In 2003 the maximum CPP contribution for employees and employers is \$1,802 and EI, \$1,147 for employers and \$819 for employees. A person who works for more than one employer in 2003 will contribute more than the annual CPP maximum if they have total employment earnings of over \$39,900. The same is true for EI total earnings over \$39,000. In that case the employee will be entitled to a refund at tax reporting time.

A parallel refund is not provided to the employer. This is because the individual employer has not paid more than the maximum amount in respect of the wage that has been paid to the employee. In other words, the legislation does not allow employers to take into account the previous or other earnings of a worker in terms of the calculation for the contribution of a refund due.

I have indicated before that there are important reasons. Clearly, providing a refund for CPP or EI contributions to employers could violate privacy to which employees are entitled. For instance, providing a lump sum refund to employers at tax time would allow them to infer information about their employees' earnings from other employers or self-employment. The fewer the number of workers on the payroll, the greater potential for the invasion of privacy. I am sure the hon. member is concerned about invasion of privacy and an individual's right not to have certain information released. An employee's work history should not be revealed through the medium of either the CPP or the EI refunds.

Refunds to employers could have other undesirable effects, obviously discrimination in terms of hiring. If employers could receive CPP and EI refunds, they would have an incentive to hire workers who have already contributed the maximum to CPP and EI. I do not think that is the intent the member wants, and I am sure we would not want to do that.

Obviously it could also discriminate against people with little or no previous earnings, like the unemployed or those entering the job market for the first time. That is certainly a concern.

Mr. Jim Pankiw: Mr. Speaker, first it is rather comical that the hon. member says they will do a thorough review and report in June. The Liberals have been in government since 1993. He has said that the EI premiums have come down over that time period but they

have always been in excess of what the EI fund needed. It has been a tax rip-off from day one.

He said that employers had not paid more than the maximum amount of each employee. However, collectively they have. If an employee has earned more than the maximum in a year through working for different employers collectively, those employers have overpaid. That is why there is a \$750 million overpayment. Revenue Canada is well aware of the numbers.

To suggest that it would somehow be an invasion of privacy to repay the employers who have overpaid their EI premiums is ridiculous. Revenue Canada already has the numbers. It could simply inform employers what they have paid over the course of the previous year. Between the two of them, they could have a formula that divides it up and says that collectively an employer overpaid x number of dollars for a certain employee and that employer should get that money back. It is not an invasion of privacy and it would be a simple calculation, easily done.

Mr. Bryon Wilfert: Mr. Speaker, all I can say to the hon. member is if there is a system that he thinks could be devised to do so, I would be interested to hear it. The reality is privacy issues are obviously of major concern to Canadians and certainly to the government. I would suggest that it is not feasible. I have outlined the issue with regard to contributions and clearly I do not want to see people being discriminated against. The hon. member may take a different view but in my view I do not think that is what Canadians want.

It is important that we continue to work, hopefully with the hon. member and others in the House, on the review and to establish the kind of EI program which the minister has indicated he would like to see developed. I am surprised that the member would criticize us for bringing the rates down. At the same time, we again have done something which in the previous government went the other way.

● (1910)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24.

(The House adjourned at 7:10 p.m.)

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