

S. O. 31

Two important points have to be made. First, by cutting funds to Canada World Youth and Crossroads, the government is cutting programs which foster international understanding through cross-cultural exchange.

Second, these funding cuts undermine all development NGOs' ability to operate in a business-like manner. Our NGOs are very prudent in their planning and management. Now, by breaking its funding contract with the NGOs, the government puts at risk the very future of these highly regarded development NGOs.

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CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, the last few weeks have seen the return of many of our military personnel from the Persian Gulf—members of the first Canadian hospital from CFB Petawawa have return; RCRs from London; three ships with full crews, and many other military personnel.

Those of us who had the privilege to welcome many of our dedicated and professional service personnel home were very impressed by their comments. As a couple of young women said: "When you are facing a crisis, there are only a few things in your life that really matter. It helps you to put important things first and the rest becomes rather immaterial". Many said: "It takes an experience like this to emphasize that we do, in fact, live in the greatest country in the world and we should develop a greater appreciation for that fact".

It is up to the rest of us as civilians to keep this country united and strong. Only in this way can we honour them and pay them the rich tribute they deserve for being excellent Canadian ambassadors and service personnel.

So let us get with it Canada, and do our part by building a great Canadian nation so that Canada can continue to play an important role both here at home and in international affairs.

REFUGEES

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, today some three million Kurdish civilians, mostly women and children, are scattered in the valleys and mountains of Kurdistan without food, shelter or adequate clothing. Under harsh winter conditions where snow covers many mountains, they are fleeing Iraqi troops, desperate to reach Turkish and Iranian borders. The roads are jammed, children are dying and Iraqi forces have fired into this stream of helpless humanity.

These victims believe that they were betrayed by the American President and the world. For the Kurds the new world order looks very much like the old. In 1988 the world turned a blind eye when Kurds were gassed in Halabja in March 1988. Indeed, as historian Arshak Safrastian said: "In the world there is probably no ethnic group that has been more persistently abused and misrepresented than the Kurdish race".

In view of this desperate situation, I call upon our government to vastly increase the level of humanitarian aid and to ensure that Kurds are treated with the same generosity as refugees in coming to Canada, as Canada has historically treated other refugees. Plainly, Canada must support the 25 million Kurdish people in their struggle for democracy, for justice, for peace and self-determination.

We stand in solidarity with the Kurdish people, with their brothers and sisters here in Canada, who have been denied justice for far too long.

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CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. John Reimer (Kitchener): Mr. Speaker, on March 21 the Supreme Court of Canada decided that the foetus is not a human being within the confines of the Criminal Code. In the absence of any other law in the Code, the court had no choice but to come to that decision.

However, that same court had invited Parliament in January 1988 to decide "the precise point in the development of the foetus at which the state's interest in its protection becomes compelling".