

*Oral Questions*

•(1415)

**MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS DAY**

**Mrs. Jean Payne (St. John's West):** Mr. Speaker, all members know that today is Multiple Sclerosis Day and that is why we are all wearing carnations.

It is estimated that 50,000 Canadians have MS but the number of people affected goes far beyond those who actually have the disease. Family and friends deal with the associated health problems each and every day. I have seen up close the impact MS can have on people.

Medical research is needed to find the causes of MS, effective treatments and ultimately a cure for the disease. However research is expensive and requires a lot of money.

I urge the people of St. John's West to support the National Carnation Campaign for the MS Society of Canada in its efforts to raise \$2 million for medical research. This Mother's Day please buy a carnation to help find a cure.

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**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD***[Translation]***RWANDA**

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Violent fighting continues between the Rwandan army and the rebels. This massacre which has already killed at least 200,000 people must stop. However, the UN assistance mission to Rwanda, now reduced to some 449 soldiers, is completely overwhelmed. Faced with his humanitarian responsibilities, the UN Secretary General has asked the Security Council to send peacekeeping reinforcements to Rwanda.

Can the Deputy Prime Minister tell us whether Canada intends to support the request of the UN Secretary General and make a direct contribution to the reinforcements requested by Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs clearly stated yesterday that Canada intended to call on the UN Secretary General to help find a solution to Rwanda's problems.

We are very, very concerned about the thousands of people now in refugee camps and also very, very disappointed with the continuing massacre. We are currently talking about the possibility of broader intervention.

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, beyond concern and disappointment, I think that

Quebecers and Canadians expect the government to indicate clearly what it intends to do, especially with regard to a very specific proposal from the UN Secretary General himself.

So what is Canada's position on this request: is it yes or no? In particular, I would ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether she admits that, without a UN intervention force, it is totally impossible to set up any medical or humanitarian operation that Rwandans so urgently need.

*[English]*

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, it is unfair of the Leader of the Opposition to characterize Canada's response as mere concern.

We have been on the ground. We are on the ground. We continue to be on the ground both with a physical presence and financial assistance. We are working very closely with the United Nations and the Security Council to ensure that the solution we find will meet with regional support, but more important, will reach out to those hundreds of thousands of people who have been left homeless as a result of this massacre.

*[Translation]*

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, while we are making speeches, while we are speaking and expressing our feelings, hundreds of thousands of people are being killed in that country, a country that is very close to Canada because of our international policies and aid programs. We have had a presence in that country for close to 100 years. What are we doing to prevent this slaughter? Some rivers are now jammed with the bodies of the people killed. We must go beyond words.

I ask the government whether the presence of an intervention force would prompt the rebels and the Rwandan army to negotiate a ceasefire that would end these barbarous events which require our intervention.

*[English]*

**Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition should understand that the commander of the UN forces in Rwanda is a Canadian and he is continuing to work under very difficult circumstances.

•(1420)

We have detailed an additional 10 personnel to take the place of the Belgians, who had to leave the country, for logistic and other support to keep the airport open. We have been putting in humanitarian aid on a daily basis. It has been Canada with its Hercules flights that has ferried out nearly 1,500 people and ferried in thousands of pounds of relief supplies.