

members I would do almost anything to be able to encourage that and to make any compromise that is necessary to have an all-party resolution so that the men and women over there could know that they are serving with full support, without any partisan disagreement or anything of that nature.

On another item, because the hon. minister did speak about the human aspect, I get upset when I see people trying to draw conclusions from certain facts that when added up really do not portray the full story that was perhaps intended, and intended with the best of intentions if I could add that caveat. I am referring to a couple of articles which have appeared in the media, and perhaps for good reason, but I think it is important to give my impression from talking to families and from talking to people who are aware of what is happening over there that morale is good. Of course there are concerns.

I would like to read three paragraphs written by Master Seaman J. B. Eldershaw, HMCS *Athabaskan*, in response to an article which indicates that there are concerns among the men and women on the ships, that there is ennui, and that they are upset about the patrols and how much time they spend on patrol, and that sort of thing. As a prelude to it and as a sailor, when sailors are not complaining you are in trouble because they always complain. God bless them; they have the right to do that. As long as people listen to them they are relatively happy. In the last three paragraphs, and they are short—he says:

Let me make it very clear: our morale is very high. In fact, I have never seen it higher and I've served aboard *Athabaskan* for the past four years.

Sitting around and waiting is always boring and this gives us a lot of time to think of things to complain about. The expression that a sailor is not happy unless he is complaining was coined for a very good reason.

There is always a minority who complain about everything. They are insatiable and are probably responsible for the article in question. These same individuals have finally realized that this is not a nine to five job and was never intended to be. My opinion of them is low and my advice to them would be, "If you can't handle it, get out of the navy. You weren't drafted, you volunteered."

It gives me great heart to hear from a fairly junior member of this force who has taken it upon himself to be concerned about these kinds of comments and concerns and to address them in a very forthright, honest, and candid manner.

Government Orders

I hope that will give relief to the parents, the friends, and the families who after all are going through the same kind of anguish, anxiety and concern as those who are serving are going through.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, it has been a long time in coming, but as one who was involved with this issue from the beginning, as the former external affairs critic for my party, I am very pleased to finally have an opportunity in the House of Commons to say something about the situation in the gulf and the Canadian response to it.

I had many occasions during the course of the summer, after the invasion of Kuwait, to call for the resumption of Parliament and to be critical of the government for finessing the requirements of the National Defence Act in such a way as to make it possible for Parliament not to have to come back until its scheduled return on September 24.

Before I say anything else, I would like to say that I appreciated listening to the hon. member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception. I understand that he had a distinguished naval career.

I was brought up in a house in which one was encouraged to have a great deal of respect for Her Majesty's senior service, my father having served in the Fleet Air Arm during the Second World War. I come from a family with a military tradition, if you like. My grandfather was in the First Canadian Mounted Rifles in the First World War, and then there was my own much less demanding service in the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada in Winnipeg. I would therefore like to associate myself with many of the things which were said by the member and also by the former defence minister about the men and women who served in Canada's Armed Forces.

One of the things I understood myself to be doing in the military, and I am sure my father and my grandfather before me understood themselves to be doing, was defending a way of life in which people had the freedom, particularly in Parliament, to be critical and analytical of the actions of their government, even when it came to military and foreign policy decisions. That is what I intend to do today, express my differences of opinion with the government about how it handled this particular issue.