

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 9, 1989

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the three parties and we have agreed to have a statement at this point regarding Remembrance Day, rather than at the usual time. Any time taken to provide for the statement this morning will be added on to the time at three o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard the motion. Is there agreement?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

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REMEMBRANCE DAY

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and pleasure today as Minister of Veterans Affairs, to remind all hon. members that Saturday is Remembrance Day, and this year, 1989, is a very special day in that it marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the beginning of the First World War and the fiftieth anniversary of the Second World War.

[*Translation*]

This year two special anniversaries emphasize just how much is owed to those who did their duty for their country in war.

First, 1989 marked the 75th anniversary of the start of the Great War, the one that was called "the war to end all wars".

[*English*]

One in every 10 Canadians fought in the First World War. Historians have said that Canada came of age in the mud and the blood of the trenches of Europe. Certainly,

the Commander of the Canadian Corps, Lord Byng, took that view. Recalling the Canadian capture of Vimy Ridge he said, and I quote:

There they stood on Vimy Ridge that 9th day of April 1917, men from Quebec stood shoulder to shoulder with men from Ontario, men from the maritimes with men from British Columbia, and the prairies, and there was forged a nation tempered by the fires of sacrifice and hammered on the anvil of high adventure.

These are noble sentiments, and I think of them when I listen to cynics who sometimes question the patriotic commitment of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

This Saturday at the National War Memorial and at hundreds of cenotaphs and monuments throughout Canada, we will be remembering those who cared a lot about their country and were prepared to risk their lives to keep it free.

• (1010)

[*English*]

We will also be remembering those who made the same commitment when the Second World War began 50 years ago this year. Over one million of our men and women carried freedom in their hearts, and are still hailed as "the Canadian liberators" on our pilgrimages overseas.

We will also be honouring the Canadian volunteers who served under the United Nations flag in Korea and helped to preserve independence for strangers in a then largely unknown and foreign land thousands of miles away.

Well over 100,000 Canadians died in those three wars and many, many more returned home sick in body and mind. Even today Veterans Affairs is assisting 144,000 men and women for disabilities incurred in wartime service.

Many years ago these words were inscribed in the Memorial Chamber in the House of Commons, and I quote: