

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, November 8, 1974

The House met at 11 a.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

FINANCE, TRADE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Second report of Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs, in both official languages.—Mr. Trudel.

[Editor's Note: For text of above report, see today's Votes and Proceedings.]

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[English]

REMEMBRANCE DAY

TRIBUTES TO MEMBERS OF CANADIAN FORCES WHO SERVED IN WARTIME

Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind hon. members of this House that next Monday is Remembrance Day, the fifty-sixth anniversary of the day when, at 11 a.m., the guns fell silent along the Western Front. Sadly, this was not the "war to end wars" that we were told it would be. Since that day many more Canadians made the supreme sacrifice in the Second World War and in Korea. In these three conflicts, nearly 115,000 Canadians gave their lives to preserve and protect the freedoms and institutions we hold dear, not the least of them being this House itself. When I look around this chamber and see empty chairs, I am often reminded of the empty chairs in Canadian homes to which so many fathers, husbands, sons and even daughters did not return.

In this connection, I want to inform hon. members that on Wednesday of this week a book was published which will serve as a fitting tribute to those who never came home. Its title is "Silent Witnesses"; in the French language version, "Témoins Silencieux". It tells the story, in words and pictures, of the cemeteries and memorials to Canadian war dead overseas. It is hoped that the book—a joint of my department and the National Museum of Canada on behalf of the Canadian War Museum—will be a source of information and comfort to the relatives and comrades of the dead, and of satisfaction to all Canadians.

Our memorials to the fallen, both at home and abroad, pay tribute to those whose names they commemorate. We are equally proud of, and grateful to, those who returned bearing the scars and wounds of battle. These we also remember on November 11. For these and many others whose lives were tragically altered by war, this nation

observes a daily act of remembrance and an acknowledgment of the debt we owe to them through the many programs of assistance to veterans. We can never do enough, but all Canadians can be proud of our achievements in this area and can rest assured that this obligation, rooted in gratitude, is being faithfully discharged.

• (1110)

On Monday we shall remember them in ceremonies across this broad land of ours. It is proper that we do so, for they have earned the eternal respect of this nation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a pleasure for me, on behalf of the official opposition, to join with the minister in the sentiments he has so well expressed. As the years go by and the memories that are vivid to many of us of World War II and the Korean war recede into the distance, it is even more important that the memory of those who made special sacrifices in those crucial days are kept ever green. We should not forget that all of the democratic freedoms we enjoy were preserved by the many, many Canadians who made the supreme sacrifice in World Wars I and II.

These memories will come back on Monday as many of the members here take part in commemorative and memorial services throughout Canada. We certainly appreciate the remarks made by this minister.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the New Democratic Party, I join in the sentiments expressed by both the minister and the spokesman for the Conservative Party in paying tribute to the veterans who fought in wars gone by. We are proud to pay tribute to them on November 11. The contribution made by those who fought in World War I was made to end all wars, but 25 years later service people were called upon to serve this country, and did so with great distinction again to end all wars.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that Canadians in the age group that do not remember the contribution made in both world wars will look at the reasons that caused those wars and will make sure that it is never again necessary to send people into battle. The responsibility is now with that age group. It seems to me they can play a better role by seeing that the world is free of war and making their contribution in that direction. They should also take the opportunity on November 11 of paying tribute to the memory of those who secured for them the freedom to make that contribution.