

Oral Questions

give her commitment that, before the B.C. case goes ahead on December 17 and before the Ontario case is appealed, she takes all three cases, as Mrs. Weir has agreed, directly to the Supreme Court of Canada?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, one of the things that makes it very difficult to discuss this issue in a sensible, rational way are the death-defying leaps in logic of the hon. member in interpreting the significance of the judgment of the New Brunswick court.

Whatever the ultimate decision with respect to what flows from section 51A of the Constitution Act, there is absolutely no legal basis for suggesting that the decisions either of this House or of the Senate would be under any kind of cloud. I wish the hon. member would do credit to our shared profession and stop making those ridiculous interpretations.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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PERSIAN GULF

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are worried with regard to resolving the Middle East crisis. Members of the Gulf Western Alliance, such as Germany, France and the Soviet Union, request patience allowing time for UN-supported sanctions to bite. Today, Canada is not seen as a member of this group, nor as actively pursuing our traditional role as a negotiator for a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister tell us today why we are pursuing the war option in the gulf, instead of the peace option?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member obviously has not been following what has been happening both in the United Nations and in the discussions that the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for External Affairs have had with counterparts while in Europe.

• (1440)

The Government of Canada has been pursuing consistently, through the United Nations and through every other option, a peaceful and diplomatic settlement to the Gulf situation.

As the hon. member referred to the U.S.S.R., I would like to read to her press reports of Mr. Gorbachev's comments while he was in Paris. He said: "The most important thing is we have to act. We have to be resolute and firm. There is a need for a meeting of the Security Council without delay to discuss the situation and take a decision. The situation continues to be dangerous. We cannot just leave things the way it is without giving them closer attention. Therefore, we have concluded that the Security Council should act without delay."

Those are exactly Canada's feelings. I am pleased that they are shared by so many leaders in the world.

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, the perception is not that Canada is pursuing the peace option.

It has been recorded that the Gulf operation is costing \$50 million a month and that this figure could quadruple if hostilities break out. In a recessionary period certain cutbacks are not acceptable.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister assure us today that the burden of these costs will not be borne through cutbacks in funding to nationally recognized essential services, such as health and welfare, security, and communications?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I know the time for the Liberal caucus meeting has passed, but the hon. member should confer with her House leader, the hon. member for Windsor West. She has said there is an allegation of \$50 million a month cost. Just prior to her statement, her House leader said \$3 million. Maybe they could join and come out with a medium or some balance of the answer.

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GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, child care is exempt from the GST. However, the centres that offer care are consequently not eligible for GST rebates on, for example, toys, cleaning supplies, and of course books. It is just another example of the insanity of this tax.