

There has been new evidence that it has come to light. I ask the Prime Minister to withdraw the suggestion that the matter is subversive and disloyal in any way, that in fact it is a serious matter and his government will respond to it.

Mr. Speaker: I know that the member put the question in a serious way, even though the way the question was put might have elicited some attempted humour in reply.

The right hon. Prime Minister may wish to comment.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I always take questions and suggestions from my hon. friend very seriously.

I did, indeed, take the last one very seriously. The government offered the hon. member the opportunity to have a complete, confidential briefing on the information available to us so that he could then base his questions on knowledge as opposed to conjecture and rumour.

I regret that I heard the hon. member decline the invitation of the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Perhaps he would like to reflect upon that and perhaps change his mind. I can assure my hon. friend of something that he already knows well and that is that anything that would offend him in any way at any time, I would withdraw.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Bill Kempling (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government responses to several petitions.

[Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.]

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ANNIVERSARY OF LIBERATION OF THE NETHERLANDS

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the House today

Routine Proceedings

that during the next 10 days we will be commemorating and celebrating the liberation of The Netherlands by the First Canadian Army. It will be 45 years ago on Saturday since Lieutenant General Charles Foulkes, Commanding Officer of the First Canadian Corps, officially accepted the surrender of the German forces in The Netherlands.

[Translation]

The surrender came at the end of a long, tough battle to liberate the people of the Netherlands from their oppressors. During that battle, our armed forces kept access routes to the major port of Antwerp open so that the Allied advance would not slow down through lack of supplies.

[English]

It was a struggle that saw our forces prevail over a do-or-die enemy and the worst ground conditions encountered during the war in western Europe. More than 7,600 Canadians died during that successful struggle to return freedom to others. Later this week, in the company of members of this House, I will have the privilege of leading a pilgrimage to The Netherlands, in order to honour the memory of those men and women and to celebrate what they achieved.

[Translation]

On the other side of the ocean, we will have an opportunity to meet thousands of our veterans, guests of the many "Thank you, Canada" committees in the Netherlands.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, the Dutch people have never forgotten what young Canadians from every province and every service achieved 45 years ago. Neither should we, ourselves, ever forget those who won our country such enduring respect.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and the privilege to respond to the statement just made to the House by the hon. Minister of Veterans Affairs.