

agree to send someone home. Certainly, by negotiating and sitting down to talk it might be found that we might be able to save the lives of Canadians if we try. However, when we do not try, I do not see how we can do much about it.

I am not one for electioneering, nor am I interested in making political points, since I am not running for election. Perhaps the Leader of the Government is interested in it and that is what he is trying to bring into this situation. I was giving him credit because Mr. Corbett, who is a Conservative Member of Parliament, is going. I think it is a great thing that he is doing for us.

DISPOSITION OF CANADIAN TROOPS IN MIDDLE EAST

Hon. M. Lorne Bonnell: Is it true that the Secretary of State for External Affairs has said as much that, regardless of the United Nations or the Americans, Canada will be sending our troops over there to solve the crisis in the Middle East. Is he not going to wait for the United Nations to make up a peacekeeping force? Are we going to send our troops over there when we could not stop 12 Indians in Quebec?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Honourable senators, if I may deal with the first part of the honourable senator's intervention, he mentioned other countries and their attitude to their nationals who are trapped in Iraq or Kuwait. I have to tell him that Canada's position, and the position of those other countries that he mentioned are identical. If, in the case of Britain, Mr. Edward Heath, and in the case of Japan, former Prime Minister Nakasone, and in the case of Germany, Mr. Brandt, and, in other cases, other personalities, have gone to the area to meet the Iraqi leadership to discuss the status of their nationals trapped in that country, or in Kuwait, then they have been unofficial and personal initiatives not sanctioned by their governments, as indeed would be the case if Messrs. Axworthy, Robinson and Corbett go to Iraq.

With regard to the second part of the question posed by the honourable senator, the answer is no.

PERSIAN GULF

COMMAND STRUCTURE OF JOINT FORCES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Jeremiah S. Grafstein: Honourable senators, my question deals with further amplification of the government's policy concerning the Gulf crisis. The U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. Baker, is currently on a trip to the Middle East. One of the reports flowing from his trip is that the Americans appear to have agreed with the Saudis that there would be a joint command structure with the Americans taking command for at least the land forces, and probably the air cover forces, in Saudi Arabia. Apparently the Saudis have also agreed to allow offensive actions as opposed to purely defensive actions to be launched from Saudi territory.

What agreement, if any, has been reached with respect to the command structure as it applies to Canadian forces in the Gulf, first with respect to air and then with respect to sea?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): I believe that question was asked some days ago and I undertook to obtain and table a reply. I undertake once again to do so if it has not already been done.

● (1500)

Senator Grafstein: Will you also at that time advise us more fully as to the government's response to the Auditor General's criticism that the Canadian forces do not have sufficient medical logistics in order to support the Canadian forces in that area? Finally, will you outline to us at the earliest possible moment what, if any, plans the Canadian government has, on a contingent basis, to employ additional forces in the Gulf if hostilities break out? What would be the services employed? What number of Canadians in the services would be employed? What would be their mission?

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, with regard to the first part of the question, I will obtain a report from Mr. McKnight, the Minister of National Defence.

I can only tell the honourable senator that the government has committed itself to bring another resolution to Parliament in the event that hostilities break out.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

REFUNDABLE TAX CREDIT—PURPOSE OF PAYMENT—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Sidney L. Buckwold: I have a question for the Leader of the Government. One of the positions taken by the government in proposing the GST and relieving lower-income families of the burden of additional taxation is the refundable GST credit. We know this is to be paid in advance, and December 1 is the date for the first payment of quarterly payments which would bring in for a family some \$580 a year. That represents some \$140 coming to them on December 1.

My remarks pertain to what happened in the House of Commons yesterday when the Minister of Finance, Mr. Wilson, complaining about the Senate holding up the goods and services tax legislation, indicated that this seriously affected business because the money is not going forward yet. It was proposed to be paid on December 1 to some 6 million to 7 million taxpayers, which represents an enormous amount of money.

During the Senate hearings the question was asked whether it was proper to advance the money before it was spent. By giving the money in advance to people who need it, quite rightly, many witnesses indicated that this might not lead to proper disbursement of the funds when they are needed.

All of this is preamble to a statement made by the minister in the House yesterday that the Senate opposition should be pressured to get this legislation through so the money can go out to "help lower-income Canadians purchase things during the pre-Christmas period". That is contrary to the purpose of subsidizing the cost and effects of the goods and services tax. The credit is there to ease the burden during the period that