

Routine Proceedings

I want to take this opportunity to mention one point that my hon. friend raised earlier, and that is with regard to those men and women who served in the Korean war. Earlier we had a discussion that recognized those men and women who received medals recently for their service during the Korean war. I choose those words consciously. People have often referred to the Korean war as a Korean conflict. They have never acknowledged that it was a war and that men and women from Canada were there to protect freedom and democracy and to put their lives on the line. Therefore we ought to be thanking those men and women who served so gallantly during that war on behalf of Canada and for what our country stands for: democracy, freedom and peace.

In conclusion I simply want to thank those who serve in our Armed Forces, particularly those serving today in the peacekeeping areas of Somalia, the former Yugoslavia, Cambodia and other trouble spots of the world. These young men and women are prepared to lay down their lives to represent Canada. It is up to us to ensure that they are able to carry out their functions properly, fully serviced with the best equipment and support systems available. It is also up to us to say that we acknowledge, recognize and show our appreciation to those who served and serve in our army, navy and air force as well as our reserves and our cadet corps.

I want to draw particular attention to those who serve in the Rocky Mountain Rangers, who have for many years now made an incredible contribution to Canada's Armed Forces, as well as to the submariners and the merchant mariners. As an auxiliary to those serving on the oceans of the world those people have demonstrated their commitment to Canada and what we stand for. We have to acknowledge that our Armed Forces are secondary to none in the world. It is interesting to note that whenever forces are called upon to serve in peacekeeping or peacemaking missions the first people to be called upon are those in the Canadian Armed Forces. For that we can all be truly proud.

• (2125)

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Madam Speaker, when the hon. member for Kamloops got up to speak I thought the least he was going to do was

offer to billet the hon. member for York Simcoe. He was waiting on that too during the games this summer.

I want to say first that this afternoon when the tributes were flowing out to Mr. Speaker in well-deserved fashion, you as our interim Chair were not mentioned at all. After I sat down I felt badly about that because I think that you have done a very good job in the chair, having been called upon rather suddenly, and I do want to pay that tribute to you this evening. I am sure others in the House will agree.

I want to start off tonight by talking about the Canadian Armed Forces. I have a major base in my riding. As a matter of fact I live in Petawawa township, just three miles from the base gate. Prior to coming to this House I was on the staff of General Panet High School on the base and got to know a lot of military families. I got to know how they lived and what their aspirations really were.

I always look upon our Canadian forces as being among the greatest forward-looking people that this country has. No institution and no organization in Canada has ever really carried the Canadian flag with pride to so many parts of the world as have the Canadian forces.

As we see the various incidents arise around the world today, we know that there are many many trouble spots. We are asking our Canadian forces to go in to all kinds of challenges, all kinds of difficult situations and many different cultures. It is very difficult sometimes to adjust to all of that. We Canadians who expect them to undertake these difficult tasks and challenges and to handle them with decorum and dignity under the United Nations banner must give them credit when they do an excellent job, when they build schools, when they build roads and bridges, when they teach local people how to grow food and practise the elements of agriculture.

There is no group that is willing in so many ways to help other people of the world to work toward success in their own country. As a result, sometimes incidents occur. As we send them into more difficult situations in the world there are going to be incidents that occur that require investigations and so on. But that is no excuse whatsoever to label our Canadian forces in general. I take great exception to some of the media coverage that has been given to them and particularly that which was