

*Oral Questions*

cy. As we do here in Canada, as we do in Europe, we participate in exercises all the time to ensure our command and control capability, and that we are prepared to deal with any exigency.

• (1430)

With respect to the cost, yes, I know. I have seen the various figures which have been around in the media. I would just like to assure my colleague that work is being finalized on the costs of these operations. We expect that to be completed in the next few days. That information will be made available to the House and to the Canadian public.

**Mr. John Brewin (Victoria):** Finally, Mr. Speaker, will the minister assure the House that, if there are to be any cutbacks to pay for the cost of the Canadian contingent in the gulf, they will come from the vast over-expenditure that is now taking place in maintaining Canadian forces in Europe now that the cold war is over?

**Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister responsible for Status of Women):** Mr. Speaker, I think that raises another issue, as I am sure my hon. colleague is aware.

The signing of the first CFE treaty is a historic event which we hope ultimately will lead to reduction in military troops in Europe of all nations. Canada has already indicated that we are planning to reduce our forces by about 1,400 and will be following the progress of future CFE talks with great interest.

Certainly, at this time, it would be premature to indicate to the hon. member and to the House just what sources may be looked for to ensure that we do have the financial resources available to continue to operate in the gulf effectively and to fulfil our mission there.

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**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment.

For weeks in the House the question has been whether the minister did or did not reach an agreement with Premier Grant Devine concerning Rafferty-Alameda. In

his affidavit to the court, the minister said: "Not only did I not make any such amending agreement I could not have as any agreement to amend the January 26, 1990 agreement would have required the approval of cabinet."

Now we have the court decision revealing that the original agreement had never been approved by cabinet. Therefore, no amendment to it would have required a cabinet approval.

In light of that, does the minister stand by his statement to the court, will he repeat it in the House or correct it?

**Hon. Robert de Cotret (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat what I have said to the House time and time again.

There was no agreement reached on September 5. There were a number of discussions held. There was a document left for me to study and to have my officials review. It is exactly what I said in the affidavit. I stand by it, and I stand by everything I have said in the House.

**Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West):** Mr. Speaker, the minister said repeatedly in the House on November 2 that he wants the January 22, 1990 agreement to be respected. We now find out through the court that that agreement was never approved by cabinet and therefore, according to the court, it is unenforceable.

When did the minister learn that this agreement had not been approved by cabinet? When did he know it might not be enforceable? Why did he continue to depend on this agreement for his whole case against Rafferty-Alameda?

**Hon. Robert de Cotret (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, we have attempted to follow the process here, and have done so quite judiciously, according to the dictates of the court.

We did appoint the panel. We got the panel up and going. We have always insisted that the Government of Saskatchewan live up to the January 1990 agreement. We believe that that agreement was a binding agreement. It is an agreement signed by both parties that indicated quite clearly that work would continue up to the level where safety was guaranteed and thereafter stop until the panel had completed its review.