

• (1510)

We usually do this during House leaders' discussions, but I will certainly involve the independent members in the discussions to find some way of bringing about a resolution. Appropriately, that should be sooner rather than later.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, this morning the government House leader made a commitment to the effect that we would be advised about the briefings. Perhaps I should raise this as a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, because I was not so advised. I am told there were briefings for many members, Mr. Speaker, but as I speak I can tell you that I was not given access to the same information. I deeply regret that.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: I know the matter was raised before. If the hon. member wants to raise it as a question of privilege, I, of course, have not had notice. The hon. government House leader may wish to respond.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, I will respond very quickly. I have had assurances from the Minister of National Defence that he, and/or his officials would be in contact with the hon. member as soon as possible. If that has not happened, it is because, understandably, other things are going on. I can assure the hon. member and other independent members that the briefings will be offered very soon.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, my office was notified about 12.35 p.m. that, as an independent member, I was to report to Room 253-D for a briefing from defence officials at 12.45. So I put on my coat, went over to that room and walked in on the NDP caucus. Obviously, there was a problem.

We may treat this lightly, but I believe that we, as independent members, have every right to be notified by the Minister of National Defence's office. I made requests of somebody in that meeting, and I was told that if I wanted to book a room, all the independents would be able to get a briefing.

Mr. Speaker, you can appreciate that it is not my responsibility to get hold of all the other independent members. If somebody was not available, then I could be accused and criticized of keeping them out of it. I believe

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that the Minister of National Defence's office should have phoned me back immediately. In fact, all the other independent members with whom I checked, many of their offices had not been contacted. This is not adequate.

On behalf of the independents, I would like to say that we would appreciate hearing as soon as possible from the Minister of Defence's office so that we can be informed as quickly and clearly as possible. It is simply not acceptable to be cut off.

Mr. Speaker: I appreciate the hon. member's intervention. I must say to the House that this is getting beyond something that can necessarily be settled across the floor of the House. The hon. Minister of Defence is seeking the floor. I will, of course, recognize him.

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief.

I do apologize to the hon. member for Beaver River. As soon as we had the opportunity to provide briefers, we informed her. Unfortunately, the briefing before hers was for the New Democratic Party. They kept the room to caucus in. We apologize. We will arrange a briefing as quickly as possible.

We also attempted to contact all other independent members. When we phoned several of the independent members from the province of Quebec we reached an answering machine. If they would check their answering machines, I am sure they will find that notification.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I fully support the comments of the hon. member for Beaver River. We are in difficult times, unusual times, so I am not casting stones. There is not an answering service in my office but we got the call at 1.28 p.m. or whatever.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

PERSIAN GULF CRISIS

SUPPORT FOR UNITED NATIONS

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Clark (Yellowhead), (p. 16984) and the motion of Mrs. Collins (p. 17150).