

Adjournment Debate

price tag required to achieve those goals. In contrast, the Liberal party promised the public low energy prices and delivered exactly the opposite. It has made deceit and deception the pathway to political power in Canada. However successful such a strategy may be, Canadians will pay the price for that deceit and for that deception for a very long time.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please, it being ten o'clock, it is my duty to inform the House that pursuant to Section 11 of Standing Order 58(11) proceedings on the motion have expired.

● (2200)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

NATIONAL DEFENCE—SUPPORT FOR PARTICIPATION IN MILITIA TRAINING

Mr. Stanley Hudecki (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, on May 20 this year I directed a question to the Minister of National Defence asking if he was considering any new legislation or amendments to existing legislation that would guarantee members of the reserve force time off from their full-time employment in order that they may participate in training and educational activities provided by the Canadian Armed Forces.

The reserves are an integral and an imperative part of the Canadian Armed Forces. According to a recent publication by the Department of National Defence, the role of the reserve force is said to be twofold: first, to enhance the war deterrence capability of the Canadian Armed Forces; and second, to support the regular force in ongoing peacetime tasks and activities. Simply put, in the words of the retired Chief of the Reserve Forces, Major General Richard H. Rohmer, the role of the reserve force is to augment the regular force in times of peace, emergency or war.

Hence, the reserve force has great importance to Canada. This fact is brought to light quickly when one considers that out of the total number of personnel in the Armed Forces, which now numbers just over 100,000, the reservists comprise just over 22,000.

But the importance of the reserve force is more than just a national issue if one views this matter in a wider context. For instance, in assessing the true military strength of the NATO nations, heavy emphasis is placed upon the number of trained, properly equipped reserve personnel immediately available.

Furthermore, the importance of the reserves within the Armed Forces itself is also clear. Brigadier General Cowan, when testifying before the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, revealed the extent of their role within the Armed Forces. He stated that it is the policy of the Department of National Defence that the regular forces and the reserve forces be partners in the Canadian Armed Forces total force concept, although one component is full time and the other is part time.

With these considerations in mind, it is submitted that this government should put forth a coherent policy to ensure and encourage the continuance of a stable and strong reserve force. There are a number of ways this could be achieved. For example, by providing and committing sufficient resources and funds so that the reserves may train with the same quality of equipment as the regular force; by aiding in programs to improve their public image; and by providing salaries that are fair and equitable. All these ways would contribute to ensure the continuance and longevity of the reserves.

Another means by which this government may aid the reservists which is worthy of discussion is by negotiating a better deal with private employers to allow the reservists to take time off work in order that they may participate in training and educational activities provided by the Armed Forces.

The ability for a reservist to be relieved from his full-time employment in order to be properly trained must be assured. To guarantee a strong reserve force, there must not only be facilities available to train upon, but members of the force must be given an opportunity to train without prejudice to their full-time employment. Reservists must be given this opportunity without fear of reprisal from their employers, without sacrificing their regular vacation time and without sacrificing seniority.

It is my understanding that many employers already voluntarily reply to requests for leave for reservist training, and of course, this practice should be encouraged and the employers congratulated. However, there still seem to be some employers who do not wish to follow this practice. In my constituency of Hamilton West, where there exists a notable reserves force, a common complaint which has been voiced in the past by a number of reservists, is their inability to be relieved from work in order to participate in Armed Forces training.

It is my understanding that the time required to be off work is not long, about 14 days. At present, there is no statutory or regulatory provision commanding employers to grant leaves of absence to reservists.

It is submitted that it is about time that this was investigated formally and in some depth, considering the great importance of the reserves force and the insignificant financial cost this proposal would have on society.

Therefore, in conclusion, I would like to ask the minister if he would consider taking this problem under serious advisement with a view to establishing mechanisms to guarantee that