

*Government Orders*

quickly to the glamour of peacekeeping and did not recognize the dangers that are so clear today.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry to interrupt the parliamentary secretary but his time is up.

• (2315)

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this discussion. I only regret that it did not take place in the last Parliament prior to the sending of troops to the former Yugoslavia.

The Prime Minister ought to be commended for giving members of the House the opportunity to express their opinion individually as to Canada's role in the former Yugoslavia and in peacekeeping missions around the world.

Parliament has been called upon today to consider the following statement:

That this House take note of the political, humanitarian and military dimensions of Canada's peacekeeping role, including in the former Yugoslavia, and of possible future direction in Canadian peacekeeping policy and operations.

I have to say how impressed I have been listening to the debate take place today, especially with the quality of speeches from the new members of Parliament. It bodes well for the future direction of the House and the importance of individual members of Parliament.

I had the opportunity to visit the former Yugoslavia before the conflict began. I cannot say how distressed I have been over the last several years to watch the constant bombardment of Dubrovnik and Croatia and the bombardment and the loss of life in Sarajevo. I cannot say how distressed I am as well to read about our Canadian troops being shot at and humiliated in Bosnia. Parliament has to come to grips with this issue and determine whether the risk involved and the cost of this mission warrant our continued participation.

Canada has made a commitment to be there until April. We ought to discharge that commitment to April and not renew our commitment given the danger faced by our troops presently in that region. As has been pointed out by a number of speakers, there is no ceasefire in Bosnia. There is no peace and there is no desire for peace. There is no peace to keep. Therefore Canada is not discharging its traditional role of peacekeeper. It is clear that we are discharging a humanitarian responsibility there to ensure that much needed aid reaches distressed regions.

In Croatia, Canada is playing its traditional role in keeping the peace in that region. I should note with interest that all members of Parliament of Croatian origin who have spoken in this discussion called for the withdrawal of troops from the

former Yugoslavia. I found that rather interesting. I did not expect those individual members to be taking that position.

In any event it is clear our troops in Croatia are serving an important function. There is no doubt our troops in Bosnia are serving an important function, but it is also true that the nature of the mandate is unclear. There has been a series of incidents that would suggest our troops are not safe.

It is also clear that the cost of the mission is rather significant. There have been estimates of upward to a billion dollars having been spent in the last several years on this mission. The incremental cost is close to half a billion dollars.

We have to be cognizant of the expense given the open-ended nature of the commitment some hon. members are suggesting. There is a clear consensus that the role of peacekeeping has changed and there is confusion of the exact role of Canadian troops in Bosnia.

Canadians are justifiably proud of and committed to our tradition of peacekeeping. They are less sure about the current efforts of our troops in Bosnia because it is not a peacekeeping exercise. We ought to take note that a significant majority of Canadians in a poll that was released today expressed some very serious reservations about our continued involvement in Bosnia.

• (2320)

Canada has done its part over the years as has been pointed out. Canada has participated in every peacekeeping mission in the last 30 years. We have certainly done our part. We have contributed to the humanitarian cause in Bosnia and in other parts of the former Yugoslavia.

It is clear that a diplomatic resolution to the problem is not imminent. I do have concerns about the length of time that Canadian troops will be called upon to "keep the peace" in that particular region. It seems to me that the diplomats have failed at the UN in trying to achieve a peace there. It was clear three years ago there would be significant conflict.

For those reasons I believe at the conclusion of our commitment in April we ought to bring our men and women back home. It is not to suggest that all peacekeepers, the British, the French and others, will withdraw. There is the assumption that if Canadians withdraw then other peacekeepers or UN forces will withdraw. That is certainly not clear.

We have an obligation. We have discharged that obligation but we must recognize as well that there will continue to be conflicts all over the world. Are we suggesting that we ought to continue to participate in every conflict? There is so much we can do as a nation both fiscally and in terms of other commitments. I would call upon the government to continue our