

*Government Orders*

understand the reason for that kind of detail when we look at these figures.

I am talking about a period of 2,160 days during which the Soviet Union suffered losses of 20 million; China, 10 million; Poland, six million; Germany, four million; Japan, two million; Yugoslavia, 1.5 million; Romania, 660,000; Greece, 620,000; and so on. I note again that the official statistic given for Canadian war dead is 42,042, when in fact the casualties go far beyond that.

If you add up the total statistics of the war dead in World War II, you are looking at close to 90 million people. You can take that to its second and third order and include those who were physically wounded, those who were wounded in mind and then those casualties of the statistics. In looking at this bill we are into another realm, another extent, another dimension, another derivative of the terrible aspects of war. These are the civilian populations, the women, the children, mothers, fathers, the people whose lives have been torn apart by the savageness, the viciousness and sometimes the inconsiderateness of war.

Even war must be civilized. Even war should be civilized. We as civilized people in this country, in this part of the world, the western hemisphere, the North American continent, should be seen as very active supporters and enthusiastic champions of this kind of cause. In a general sense I think we have to be very careful that in any note of proposing a sentence, a fraction of a word, a nuance, an extension of a verb or the parsing of a phrase that we do not lose sight of the over-all support that should be considered for this bill.

I want to take this opportunity, in as non-partisan a sense as I can, to make a comment like that which I made at the beginning of my presentation. I believe my hon. colleague from across the floor also suggested that it is almost a paradox that we are now looking at these conventions that pertain essentially to the concern and care for civilians and civilian casualties in time of war.

At first, second and maybe even third glance, peace seems to be breaking out all over. I could talk a long time on that subject. I just left the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs. We had two presentations made to us. While it would be inappropriate for me to try to include even parts of what both witnesses had to say at that committee, I do believe that I should make some comment with respect to this aspect of the bill. I have a piece of paper here in small

preparation for this presentation this morning with a quotation given to Plato, that only the dead have seen the end of war. I would suggest that some greater men living in our time right now may be believing that and they may not be, I am not sure, but I would like to look at that for a while.

• (1230)

We are beginning a new year and a new decade and when I compare it to 1980 there is quite a comparison. I recall in another incarnation sitting in essentially a war room, a headquarters centre, worrying very much about the state of the world. The strategic assessment in January 1980 was far different from the strategic assessment of today. The Afghans had been attacked by the Soviet Union and the situation all over Europe was very bad.

We have ushered out these events to a large degree from the 1980s. We have a foundation now in the 1990s that would lead us to believe that maybe we should concentrate more on the dimensions of the civilian aspects of defence and perhaps denigrate, reduce, give less emphasis to, and be fairly lenient in budget cuts in trying to get our expenditure under control in defence matters.

In a general sense, I, and I am sure many of my colleagues on both sides of the House, have read what we know of the strategic situation right now. If there is anything that can be said in a general sense it is that the situation is dynamic, fluid and in some ways, if you use the definition of stability, essentially meaning you know what is happening. I would suggest there might be a good argument for believing that there may be more instability and more change at this point in time in our history, especially the history of those of us in the House of Commons today, than there has been at any other time in our lives.

We have a change in the world's economic, political and social structure. These are the products of decades and products of things like the Second World to which I made reference a few moments ago, and even centuries in creating for us an environment of perceived instabilities and indeed the structures that pertain to them. Perceived instabilities bring with it hostages, fear and insecurities. In turn, instability and insecurity lead to an even faster change of pace as governments scramble to try to meet the change, respond to the change, try to amend their policies and to make statements in their