

• (1600)

The Fathers of Confederation put this nation together with great difficulty. Other people have come along since that time and have had tremendous input into it. Many people across this land have come from many other countries and built this nation and developed it. They worked long, hard hours.

I remember, even though I was not very big, the Great Depression of the 1930s. I was not even going to school, but I can remember what people went through at that time. I sometimes look back and wonder how people ever survived that. I think of my mother and father. The thing that I feel brought them through it and helped them to face up to those issues of providing food for their family and remaining very loyal to their country and very interested in their country and managing their affairs very scrupulously was the fact that they had a faith. They had a faith through their own religious beliefs and they practised them.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that you have witnessed this yourself, where your own parents taught you many great qualities: humanitarianism, your religious duties, your duty to your country, your duty to do a day's work for a day's pay, and a duty to look toward the future and find out what you can do for mankind.

I can really get carried away on this subject because there is nothing that is more important to every Canadian, from coast to coast and from south to north in this nation today, than to sit down and talk and put this nation together so that it is going to last for generations and centuries to come. It is going to mean a flexibility of our minds. We cannot all be staid in our ways and it is either my way or the highway. That is not the philosophy we are going to have to exercise in this country. It is part of our relationship with our own fellow people.

We as civilians in Canada need the same kind of dedication, breadth of mind, personal discipline, desire and seriousness to keep this country together. We will require a commitment on the part of all Canadians and a flexible attitude on many matters. That is what those young Canadian Forces personnel taught me yesterday. I have been groping for some time to find a real, sincere and open way to express my feelings. I must say, with the words they were expressing yesterday and what they have

### *Government Orders*

come through and their dedication to duty, we must as civilians in this Canadian nation can do our work out there across the country, we must, as 295 members in this House of Commons do our work in a sincere and dedicated manner for this country and open up our minds and communicate well with each other and have a firm commitment. But we must also have faith in ourselves, we must also have faith in our maker and ask for his guidance and we must have faith in our fellow parliamentarians. That is what is going to keep this nation together. I think it would be a great idea if all parties in this House of Commons, perhaps even through you, Mr. Speaker, had a world day of prayer for the Canadian nation, a special service in every church, in every religious centre across the country.

I am delivering this type of speech at this time because we are today passing a bill to borrow billions of dollars to cover the costs of operating the country. We cannot just go on doing this forever. We must work closely together to put things together in this nation and to build the Canadian nation, but we must have that communicating factor and have our total act together.

Those men and women who have returned from the Persian Gulf are expecting parliamentarians in general to work to keep our country strong here at home. If we can do our work here at home as well as they are able to do theirs abroad, we will have it made.

It is important to have a strong federal government in Canada, one that relates in realistic terms to the regions of this country. If Canadians are going to continue to have any of the fine qualities and services of life that have been available to them for many years, this must happen.

There is another angle to this. If Canada is strong at home then we can continue to perform constructively and with humanitarianism in international affairs. When we look back over Canadian history, we have seen many Canadian statesmen who have led the way in many very useful operations in international affairs. Canada has played a role in international affairs far beyond our size and, I suppose, importance as a nation but it has been done. Only if we are strong here at home and have a unified nation in the future, only then can we continue to be a great influence on other nations of the world.