

and the number of jobs has increased by 200,000 since August.

This is not a miracle but sustained, steady, impressive progress that will achieve my honorable friend's social objectives.

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[English]

### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception):** Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago the government House leader stood in the House and defended the government's handling of the unfortunate incident in which the Canadian public learned through the media about the death of a Somali involving five Canadian peacekeepers three weeks after the event.

My question is for the Minister of National Defence. Why did the minister not inform the House of this incident as soon as it happened?

• (1435)

**Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, the incident was made public the day after it happened by a press release from the Department of National Defence in theatre. I have here a copy of the press release that was issued March 18 of this year.

The event was made public immediately. There was some confusion because a copy of this press release was not communicated to the Department of National Defence in Ottawa and I have instituted a revision of our communications policies to ensure that does not occur again.

**Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception):** Mr. Speaker, last week the military announced that the Somali death of March 16 should have been announced as soon as it happened instead of waiting. They announced there is an error.

The DND director of public affairs said that delay was a result of confusion over two separate incidents occurring over two separate days.

My supplementary question is for the Minister of National Defence who should know it is ultimately the

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minister's responsibility, and the minister's alone, to inform Parliament and the Canadian public. Why is the minister allowing departmental officials to take flak over this issue and why does she not admit to exercising poor judgment in this case?

**Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, events of this sort are always communicated in the same way directly to the press. There was another event that happened at a similar time that was picked up by the press. This one was not. It is not the custom to always announce these things in Parliament as that hon. member knows well from his experience in the military.

As I have said it was an unacceptable mistake that this was not communicated to defence headquarters and I have taken steps to ensure that error would not happen again.

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### HELICOPTER PROGRAM

**Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence who has been running around the country saying politicians have to listen to Canadians. At the same time she ignores the fact that four out of five Canadians oppose her helicopter project.

She is prepared to spend billions of dollars to prop up an Italian firm, Agusta, even though that company is at the centre of the corruption scandal which is rocking democracy in Italy. The president of the firm has been arrested on charges of bribery and corruption. There is an arrest warrant outstanding for the director general and the police are searching for other executives of the firm.

Does the minister really think she is listening to Canadians when she is spending billions of dollars of Canadian taxpayers' money to do business with a company that is rocked by scandal?

**Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, even if I were not Minister of National Defence, I was Minister of Justice and I am a lawyer and I am someone who has respect for the law and the rules of evidence. I would