

Government Orders

We have had a debate about the roles and future roles of the Canadian forces. I can say to the House with all sincerity that the roles that the Canadian men and women who serve in the Canadian forces will undertake, whether today or in the future, will be roles that they are capable of taking. They will be roles that they trained for and roles that will minimize the risk, if you can minimize risk in a war.

That is what a government does. It makes a decision, maybe not for today, maybe the decision that we made is for tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow. I believe it is. I believe that the opportunity to contribute to world order. A responsible government that leads a democracy and a government that has the country of Canada and the history of Canada to support it, has the responsibility that we have taken.

We on this side of the House, basically as parliamentarians and partisan politicians, have to look at what we do after this debate.

After this debate, if the motion that is before the House is supported, the Parliament of Canada has spoken and the government has made a decision. In our system of democracy and our parliamentary system, it is difficult not to be partisan after a debate. It is difficult not to continue to carry on the political debate after the votes have been taken. We are able to do it as persons with one another but we are not able, in most cases, to do it as political parties.

If there is one thing that I admire about my cousins south of the border, it is that after the debate and after the decision has been made and the political points have been made, what do Republicans and Democrats do? They go ahead and they say: "I was involved in the debate and I did not succeed in convincing my colleagues but my country needs my support, my President needs my support, and therefore I will do it and I will support my country." That is what we ask. That is what the men and women who serve Canada and what the population of Canada deserve.

Madam Speaker, I would like to move under Standing Order 26:

That this House continue to sit beyond the ordinary hour of adjournment to continue the debate on motion 27.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

And more than 15 members having risen:

Madam Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 26(2), the motion is deemed to have been withdrawn.

Mr. Riis: Madam Speaker, I rise on a short point of order. There have been discussions for most of the day to attempt to arrive at a suitable debating schedule on what has to be the most important debate this House has seen in decades.

We offered earlier today, without any question, to sit until at least midnight to discuss these important issues, as we did last night. I am not certain of the wisdom of sitting in the middle of the night, considering many people are watching these debates and want to watch these debates. There are a whole set of questions to be asked.

I want to make the point that continuous negotiations between the parties have occurred during the day. All of a sudden, out of the blue, comes this initiative that, in a sense, is rigged in favour of the government. I do not know whether the government wants to get out of debating this issue as quickly as possible. I do not know whether it wants to go on a holiday as a result of the embarrassment of its position, but I do not understand this initiative.

We are prepared to debate for days and days. We are prepared to debate late at night and early in the morning. While we are saying that we are not prepared to debate around the clock so that the debate will in a sense be curtailed, we are prepared to discuss further, if it is the wish of the House leaders from the other parties to see if we can come to a decision on a debate for the rest of the day. If that is not to be done and we have no assurance of that, then I am afraid that the debate will be ending at six o'clock.

• (1740)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, I find the New Democratic Party's position somewhat perplexing. We just heard this party refuse to allow the House to extend the debate past the usual time