

For the second time, I sought unanimous consent of this House to introduce a motion. The motion would have done the following. It would have established a committee from all sides of this House to travel to the Middle East, not in six weeks time or two months time when the government needs a diversion, but right now. The government has sent over 1,000 men and women into that area. I and people on this side of the House felt that it was proper that a committee of this place be struck of members to go over and observe the conditions under which our men and women and our equipment is operating, talk with them and report back with recommendations at the earliest possible opportunity.

I have sought unanimous consent of the House twice, and twice it was refused. I give this House notice that I will continue to rise under Routine Proceedings to put that motion until the people opposite see the sense in what I am trying to do. We want some accountability and reportability. We want to support the men and women that this government has sent to the Persian Gulf. Perhaps some day that will come about.

In conclusion, the motion that is before us, the main motion, not the subamendment and the amendment, is a motion that everybody in this House, I would hope, would like to support. But there is a problem with the motion.

• (1600)

I do not understand why the government has to try to play politics with every single issue that comes up. It could very easily have consulted with the House leaders of the Official Opposition and of the New Democratic Party, and it could have come up with a resolution that was supportable by all sides of this House.

This is a national issue. It is not a partisan issue for these people opposite to play with. After the summer of discontent and the summer that they hid in the woods. They had to come back with a motion that they knew some members of this place were going to have great difficulty in supporting, because the motion would mean that not only do we support the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces but we support this government's censuring of public opinion and parliamentary debate on issues as serious as the one that is before this House now.

Government Orders

In conclusion, I would hope members opposite, the House leader opposite and the Whip opposite will continue to listen to leadership on this side of the House. We are trying very hard to come up with the solution so that by the time these resolutions come to a debate the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces will have no question in their minds but that their actions on behalf of this government and the people of Canada are supported by members of Parliament, and that the motion that is put forward is one that does not have the traditional attachments to it to try to reap some benefits on this very sad situation to members of the government.

I would hope that by the time that motion is put cooler heads and less partisan heads will prevail on the other side and that the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces will know that they are supported by parliamentarians.

Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Mr. Speaker, I do not necessarily have a question, but I do have a comment to make to the hon. member for Dartmouth.

Just last Sunday I met with Janet van Nostrand, a woman whose son is serving on the *Athabaskan*. We talked for several minutes. Young Lieutenant John has been in the Armed Services for about five years. He is 29 years old and a graduate of engineering from the University of Toronto. Janet and her husband, Dr. Peter, talked to John on Sunday morning, September 30. John relayed that morale was high and spirits were good. The working order of the HMCS *Athabaskan* was functioning well. He made a point of saying that.

I just want to express the thought to the hon. member that I feel a little uncomfortable in how political he seems to try to make this situation.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Attewell: A thought went through my mind about these brave men and women serving over there who are obviously nervous and wondering what the future holds, it is such a powder keg over there. If we were to play back the hon. member's speech, I was wondering whether that would help their morale, their pride and so on. I do take a little exception here. I think they would rather have us thinking about things that will help them with their confidence, humbly praying for their return, and not making a political harangue of this situation.