

Government Orders

kinds of roles. I have great confidence in that; I think that is a very important direction in which we need to go.

We are also going to have to do things better and more effectively. We all know that when there is a lot of money around, people perhaps tend to get a little flush and that is not the case now. So those kinds of reviews are going on and I look to the support and assistance of hon. colleagues who, I know, serve on the standing committee to assist us with their suggestions and input. I am sure they will be very helpful as we try to meet these difficult challenges that lie ahead of us.

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): There is nothing I would like better than to question the hon. minister but I have already participated this afternoon. Therefore I would like to be gracious to one of my colleagues, the hon. member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception, who was recognized by you, Mr. Speaker, after me. So, with sadness, I will not put all my questions but I will put my comments in a speech. I regret this but I want to be gracious to my colleague.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis. I should like to direct to the Minister two questions, and make a brief comment.

[*English*]

By way of comment, as the associate critic of defence, as a Newfoundlander and as a Canadian, I want to sincerely thank the hon. minister for her comment and for her personal, as well as her colleagues' support of the Canadian forces, indeed Canada.

I did note in her presentation that she dwelt very much on the mechanics of the United Nations' resolutions and how we responded to them. Personally I found that instructive. I am sure that the listening audience, the public, also found it instructive and very helpful in trying to understand this very complex situation.

I do have a couple of questions for the minister. They are not hidden questions and I do not think they are difficult questions. I will say that I supported the action

of the country, but there is one area that I feel somewhat constrained to comment on. I will put the question to the minister and hope that she can shed some light on it.

I say I support the action. I know the minister has supported it. I am sure other ministers and, I would suggest, many members of this House have supported it. However, I am not sure that every member does support it. I think the advantage of bringing this to discussion in the House of Commons, in the Canadian Parliament before we commit one troop or one gun to an action of this kind is very important.

Historically we have done it in World War I and World War II. We did it in Korea. Perhaps I do not engage in partisanship as much as I should or could, but I understand this is not a question of partisanship. It is not a question of trying to get even with the government, or to score political points.

I think that when a country is sent into a zone that could end up in war, as the minister said: "God forbid, blood may be shed and people may be killed", you have to be prepared to do that, Mr. Speaker. The last thing I want to do is try to scare the public, but I do not think there is any member of the public, the 58 per cent who support this action on the part of the government, who would not have preferred to have a full discussion in the House of Commons. The points that are being brought out now would have been obvious to them before the decision was made. However, it is too late for that now.

I would like to ask the minister if she could tell us what went on behind that decision. Was there reason for it? Was time the problem? Was there something else? Maybe the public would be interested in knowing.

The British consulted the opposition. Even George Bush who does not really have to according to his Constitution consulted the members of his opposition.

My second question is this. Does the minister have any concept of what we are looking at in time? What is her estimate and the estimates of her colleagues?

Mrs. Collins: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to say the member for Saint-Denis in Montreal is always gracious. I appreciate that.