

### Oral Questions

the United States and the European Community have been waging a costly war to market their agricultural products, a war whose annual tab amounts to \$300 billion in financial support of every description.

Mr. Speaker, I urge our government to remain firm at the negotiation table so that our agricultural producers may keep what they have acquired through many years of efforts and sacrifices.

\* \* \*

[English]

### MILITARY FAMILY SUPPORT CENTRES

**Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth):** Mr. Speaker, as you know, my riding of Dartmouth is home to many of the men and women who are currently serving under three Canadian naval ships, HMCS *Athabaskan*, HMCS *Terra Nova* and HMCS *Protecteur* which have been deployed in the Persian Gulf.

It is also home to the families who have been left behind while their loved ones go off to an area of the world in conflict. To say that these people—wives, husbands, children, parents, and friends—are living through a stressful period of time would be an understatement.

Fortunately, they do not have to wait in isolation. Thanks to the work of the Military Family Support Centre, under the direction of Lieutenant Commander Tom Willdey, they have been strengthened through the establishment of special Ships Spousal Support Networks for each of the ships on deployment.

It is a chance for the families who have been left behind to get together and get involved in activities, to be updated on Gulf news, or simply to enjoy the company of someone with whom they share a similar experience.

The idea of the Ships Spousal Networks is not new. They often come about when a vessel is away at sea. However, under these circumstances these networks are special and participants are describing them as a lifeline.

Thanks to the work of Lieutenant Commander Willdey, the staff, and volunteers at the military family support centre, these life lines remain strong. For that

the families, the community, and members of all parties in the House of Commons thank them.

\* \* \*

### VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Southeast):** Mr. Speaker, last Friday, a few veterans in my constituency were left with the mistaken impression that they would be adversely affected by spending cuts included in the supplementary estimates. I have discussed this matter with the Hon. Gerry Merrithew, Minister of Veterans Affairs, and am pleased to tell those veterans and the House that they will not be touched as the Department of Veterans Affairs finds \$3 million in reductions.

For instance, there will be no reduction in budgets for disability pensions, no reductions in war veterans allowances, and no reductions in the Veterans Independence Program. The cost of transport for counsellors to veteran clients will not be cut. No cuts are being made in the operation of the veterans' hospital or veterans' homes. Reductions will only apply to operating and capital budgets so veterans in Calgary and across the country will not be adversely affected by spending cuts.

---

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

### PERSIAN GULF

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Canadians are aware of a draft resolution currently under discussion among members of the United Nations Security Council. This resolution would authorize all necessary means to get Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait on or before a deadline, likely this coming January 1 or January 15.

Yesterday, speaking from the Middle East, the Secretary of State for External Affairs said, and I quote: "My personal view is that deadlines are artificial."

Will the Prime Minister confirm that the Secretary of State for External Affairs was speaking for the government when he said that deadlines are artificial?

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.