

Oral Questions

my privilege yesterday to join with Canadians from communities across the country at the national kick-off ceremony.

This week gives individuals with disabilities the opportunity to celebrate their many accomplishments and allows for the setting of new goals for improving access.

With learning as the focus of this year's celebration, we are reminded that learning is a lifelong process. It is important to ensure that all learning opportunities are available to everyone, including Canadians with disabilities.

We have much to learn from each other. Canada cannot afford to ignore the tremendous talents, abilities and skills that persons with disabilities can contribute to the workplace, to schools and to communities.

As members of Parliament let us commit to removing all physical and attitudinal barriers faced by persons with disabilities to ensure their full participation in all aspects of community life.

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• (1415)

PETE MCGARVEY

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the House and recognize the contributions my friend Pete McGarvey has made to Canada and Canadians for many years.

I have known Pete McGarvey for the last 21 years and he has had an immense influence on my life since first meeting him in 1974. I commend the city of Orillia for inducting him into Orillia's Hall of Fame.

Pete McGarvey was chosen for his continuing service in the community, for being the driving force behind the restoration of the Leacock home and for his accomplishments as a successful writer and broadcaster.

I am confident the citizens of Orillia will agree with me, Mr. McGarvey deserves this honour and much more.

I call on the House to join with me in congratulating Pete McGarvey, his family and the city of Orillia for making him its choice for the Hall of Fame.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

BOSNIA

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, following the meeting of the contact group on Bosnia, Canada's allies decided to respond to the affronts by

Bosnian Serbs by consolidating the action of the peacekeeping forces through a redefinition of their mandate and a diplomatic approach to obtaining the release of nearly 400 peacekeepers, including ten Canadians. Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs followed closely in NATO's footsteps this morning, but without, however, setting out Canada's position in clear terms with respect to the consolidation of the peacekeepers' mandate.

My question is for the Prime Minister. In the light of the emergency debate permitted yesterday, would he tell us what definite instructions he sent to his Minister of Foreign Affairs, who will represent us tomorrow at NATO's other meeting?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity yesterday in this House to explain the need at this point for the United Nations to establish new directives for the troops in order to avoid a repetition of the hostage taking and, perhaps, to redefine their mandate so that the troops could act more quickly in the event of an emergency than they have been able to in the past.

Today, at the United Nations, the Secretary General is to submit new directives in this regard to the Security Council. We had an opportunity over the weekend to express Canada's point of view. We will see what the Security Council decides. Our troops in Bosnia are under the command of the United Nations, and the UN gives the necessary orders.

The Secretary General confirmed to me that the role of our soldiers needed redefining and that they should be redeployed so as to be in a position to defend themselves more readily. We will see what the UN decides later on this week.

As for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, he is acting on the instructions in the statements issued in this House during yesterday's debate by the Minister of National Defence and my responses in Question Period yesterday.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Foreign Affairs has only what the Prime Minister has just said to go on, he will have to fudge it tomorrow in Brussels, because there is nothing clear in what the Prime Minister has said, it is extremely ambiguous. Other countries are members of the UN forces and have made concrete decisions. France, Great Britain and the United States, for example, have sent additional troops and equipment that is more suitable for over there.

I would ask the Prime Minister to tell us whether his government has sent or will send additional equipment on an emergency basis such as heavier tanks and arms so that our peacekeepers may defend themselves and bring their peace mission to a successful conclusion.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have not yet made any decision in this regard. We believe that our troops, where they are placed at the moment, have what they need in order to be able to react, particularly if