

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

STANDING COMMITTEE

ON

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Thursday, December 2, 1999

Committee Room 1

Pearson Peacekeeping Centre

Printed and Published by Nova Scotia Hansard Reporting Services

VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

William Langille (Chair)
Eileen O'Connell
Jerry Pye
Mark Parent
David Wilson (Cape Breton East)
David Morse
David Hendsbee
Mary Ann McGrath
Brian Boudreau

In Attendance:

Darlene Henry
Legislative Committee Clerk

WITNESS

Alex Morrison
President, Pearson Peacekeeping Centre



HALIFAX, THURSDAY, DEC. 2, 1999

STANDING COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

9:00 A.M.

CHAIR

William Langille

THE CHAIR: I would like to welcome everybody here today, our colleagues from Cape Breton and Dartmouth as well as Kings County. I would like to welcome Mr. Alex Morrison who is the President of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre in Cornwallis. You have a presentation you would like to make this morning, Mr. Morrison, so we will let you start with your presentation and we will ask questions after if any of the members have questions.

ALEX MORRISON: Mr. Chairman, thank you and the members of your committee for the opportunity to be here today to talk about the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, what the centre has accomplished and what it hopes to do in the future. The Pearson Peacekeeping Centre is like a lot of good Nova Scotia institutions, it probably has a much better reputation and is much more well known outside the province and around the world than it is in the province. I thank you and the members of your committee for affording me this opportunity to speak today, one of the results of which, I hope, will be greater knowledge by all Nova Scotians of the good work of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre.

Today I want to say some words about the establishment of the centre, our activities and if you would allow me to be so bold, to put forward a couple of suggestions about how I think this committee might be able to spread the word about the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre. As most of you know, it was established in 1994 by the Government of Canada to enhance the Canadian contribution to international peace, security and stability by providing research, education and training opportunities in all aspects of peacekeeping to civilian and military people from all around the world.

The Pearson Peacekeeping Centre is not a government organization, although it was established by the government and is funded mainly by the government, we have an arm's-

length relationship with the Government of Canada and I, as President of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, am responsible to a board of directors. We began operations in 1995 and since that time well over 1,500 people have attended our courses and approximately another 1,000 people have participated in other activities of the PPC. Those civilian and military peacekeepers and want-to-be peacekeepers and those who are interested in peacekeepers, have come from approximately 125 countries.

So, in the last five years, we have had about 2,500 people come to the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre from 125 countries. They have learned, not only about peacekeeping, but they have learned about the Annapolis Valley and they have learned about Nova Scotia and they have formed long and lasting relationships with Nova Scotians. We are as proud of that tangible evidence of our success as we are in our success of educating peacekeepers.

We were very happy, in the beginning, that Joe Casey and Earle Rayfuse brought a motion before the Legislature congratulating the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre and wishing us well. Earle Rayfuse was a staunch friend of the PPC, as is Joe Casey.

When the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre was established by the government a number of us sat down and said, now how do we make the PPC different from other peacekeeping training centres in the world? Depending upon the breadth of your definition, there are approximately three dozen peacekeeping training centres in the world and we wanted to make ours unique and we did that through two ways. One is by having a very wide and very deep definition of peacekeeping which says that peacekeeping is not a purely military activity, it is a conflict resolution activity best engaged in by professionally trained civilian and military peacekeepers. We coined the term, the new peacekeeping partnership, which said that people have to work together, military, government, parties to the dispute, civilian police, democratization, non-government organizations, for only by working together in conflict resolution can civilian and military people make the best use of their resources.

As you are aware, the definition of a veteran in Canada has evolved within the last decade and now acknowledges, to a great extent, the contribution made by Canadian peacekeepers and others who have served - and 125 of whom have been killed - in the service of peace. As the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre implements its mandate and accomplishes its mission, we are mindful of the fact that the ranks of Canadian veterans will include more and more former peacekeepers. It is through the efforts of these peacekeepers that we hope that in the future, Canadians will never have to go to war again, will never have to deal with a Vimy Ridge, a D-Day, a Kap'Yong or a Gulf War.

When one reads about the Gulf War syndrome and post-traumatic stress disorder it is evident that there is still a very great human cost to Canada's involvement in world affairs. We hope, at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, by continuing to do what we do, that we will reduce the number of people who come home injured in mind or body.

Let me explain some of the activities we undertake at the PPC. Our first activity is the conduct of courses. Each of our courses, with the exception of one, is two weeks long, typically 30 to 35 military and civilian people from about 20 countries. Each of our courses is academically recognized by Canadian and American universities. So someone attending a two week course can obtain a full university credit and many people have done so. We offer about 15 regular courses a year, a couple of special courses and some seminars. We offer courses in, for example, the new Peacekeeping Partnership in Action. That tells military and civilian people about one another, fosters toleration and respect, and shows how civilians and military work together in accomplishing the true aim of peacekeeping, which is the saving of lives and the alleviation of human suffering.

We have a course on peacekeeping negotiation which is very popular. It is attended twice a year by about 40 or 45 people each time, again a mixture of civilian and military, each course from about 20 countries around the world. We teach a course on the legalities of peacekeeping. This is not a course specifically for lawyers but for people who are interested in the legal regulations, and as peacekeeping has proliferated, as more and more missions are established in various countries around the world, of course the body of law and regulation has grown. We teach a course on refugees and internally displaced persons. There are now over 30 million refugees and internally displaced persons around the world.

Let me say a word about how we teach the courses. When we wanted, in the beginning, for example, to have a course on refugees, we sat down and we said, what do you think the aim should be, what do you think the scope should be? We then called in the experts and they helped us design the course. We bring in the experts to conduct the course and to be guest speakers. So the course on refugees, the last time we conducted it, one of our directing staff members had come from managing a refugee camp of 75,000 in Africa. Another one was someone who had worked with refugees in Kosovo. That is the way we do it. They come to Cornwallis, in the Annapolis Valley, teach these courses, pass on their knowledge and then go back out to the field. We ensure that the people who come to us regularly from these 125 countries, are supplied with up-to-date information.

We have courses in engineering. We have courses in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, and in that latter instance, the United Nations is now using our course material to teach the rest of the world how to disarm fighters and reintegrate them into local communities. We teach about the Maritime dimension of peacekeeping. You know, of course, that the headquarters of the Canadian contingent at East Timor is in a ship, and it was the same in Somalia; as well, the benefits that the navy can bring to peacekeeping. We teach a course on human rights. Human rights is a subject which has come to the fore more and more in recent years with the passing of the Cold War. We conduct seminars and we publish books.

This year, 1999, is the 50th Anniversary of Canadian participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions, and that fact has not been remarked on anywhere in the country. On December 16th, at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, we are going to hold a commemorative seminar marking this golden anniversary of Canadian participation in U.N. peacekeeping missions. I extend a cordial invitation to all of your members, Mr. Chairman, and to your legislative colleagues, who may wish to come. At the same time, we are going to dedicate our main training building to the memory of Brigadier H.H. Angle of Kelowna, British Columbia, who was the first Canadian killed on a U.N. peacekeeping mission, in an airplane crash with 20 colleagues in July 1950.

I would also like to tell you about other activities such as our involvement in exercises. We have been involved, since March 1996, in very major peacekeeping exercises in Canada and abroad, and from our point of view our aim is to impress upon the military that peacekeeping is not a purely military activity, that due attention must be paid to cooperation with civilians and that a military commander cannot spend 100 per cent of available time on purely military matters. That is not the contemporary realism of peacekeeping.

At the beginning of October, 125 officers from NATO's Atlantic Fleet came to Cornwallis and we conducted a one week command post exercise in peacekeeping for them. In June 1998, 120 people came from Allied Forces Central Europe in Holland to the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre. Last week, a couple of dozen naval officers from Maritime Forces Atlantic came. The Canadian Forces are using us for their peacekeeping exercises. We are running exercises for NATO's Southern Atlantic Fleet headquartered in Lisbon, Portugal. So our word, and our expertise, is spreading throughout the world.

We have a Canadian Peacekeeping Press, which is our publishing arm, and it puts out 8 to 10 books a year and you will find a list of those books in the catalogue in the information package that you have.

I mentioned that each of our courses is two weeks long, academically accredited, except for one, which is four weeks long. It is also given credit by universities but more credit than a two week course. It involves a visit by course members to New York to talk with United Nations officials and a visit to an active peacekeeping mission. That is a very popular course.

We charge for our courses but we have a very extensive scholarship program for civilians, and I would like to ask you to do what you can to make this scholarship program known to students, to interested members of the public, to those who want to learn more about peacekeeping. We have a very ambitious intern program at the centre. At any one time, we have 12 to 15 students from about 10 countries around the world who come to us and spend six months to a year being interns. They contribute to us and we contribute to their education. Since we started the internship program, about four and one-half years ago, we have been very successful and we now have former interns working, for example, in the Privy Council office

in Ottawa, at UNICEF and UNESCO in Paris, at the OSCE in Vienna, working with peacekeeping forces in Kosovo and East Timor and actually running programs. So we are developing not only the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre alumni of 1,000, 2,000 or 3,000 people around the world, but also of the interns.

In 1995, the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre created the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres and we provide the secretariat co-directors. My colleague recently attended a meeting in Hawaii at which the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres, founded by the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, headquarters in Cornwallis Park, Nova Scotia, was asked by the United Nations to take a leading role in determining how peacekeeping training centres around the world can be certified and officially recognized. I think that is very good.

We also have an initiative with the League of Peaceful Schools - which is known to some of you - where we bring students to Cornwallis, some of them, and we teach them compromise and consensus, that there is a better way for children in schools to solve quarrels than trying to punch one another in the face. We do that because we believe in this very wide and deep definition of peacekeeping. We deal with people, from school children in Nova Scotia to neighbourhood facilitators in Bosnia to what is happening in Kosovo, to running reintegration seminars in Guatemala. We are constantly travelling and spreading the word about the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre.

Mr. Chairman, as members of this committee are well aware, Nova Scotians have never hesitated to answer the call to arms. As the co-author of the History of the Cape Breton Highlanders, I know of the spirit, enthusiasm and the determination with which Nova Scotians have fought for our ideals and our principles and to preserve our way of life. Participation by Nova Scotians in peacekeeping over the past 50 years has been just as impressive. Many have achieved positions of prominence and have performed with distinction.

I would also like to mention the firm bonds that the centre has established with members of the local community. Many have served as sponsors for course participants and those who come to the centre for other reasons from all around the world. We have had a number of visits from families of participants who have come back to visit their sponsors in the Cornwallis area and a number of people from the Cornwallis area have gone, for example, to Malaysia to visit the families of course participants they met. So we are also fostering these international exchanges.

As I indicated at the beginning, notwithstanding the work that we do and our firm bonds within the local community, perhaps because of the nature of our work, the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre is better known outside Canada and Nova Scotia than inside.

Perhaps, if you would permit me, I could outline a few ways in which members of the Legislature might be able to assist in bringing the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre to the attention of more Nova Scotians; for example, a resolution of the Legislature recognizing the work of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre. This was done in 1995 and there was another one in 1998 which recognized the work but perhaps one in 1999 might be appropriate as well. Perhaps members of the Legislature could mention the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre and its achievements in speeches and we would be quite willing to provide the background material. Perhaps it might be appropriate for the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre to receive mention and recognition in various provincial publications.

PPC faculty members are available to speak to service groups, to local organizations, to conventions, to business meetings, to any occasion where people will gather and would be interested in hearing. Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, your committee might wish to visit the PPC at an appropriate time, perhaps when we have a course in-house, to attend one of our celebratory Company of Good Cheer dinners, and speak to people from around the world to see how much they appreciate what is being done in Nova Scotia. I do hope that you might find time in the future to accept that invitation, come to the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre in Cornwallis and learn more about us.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to be here today and I am very happy to listen to your comments and try to answer questions. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr. Morrison. For those of you who may not have read the background on Mr. Morrison, I must say it is one of the most extensive backgrounds that I have ever had the pleasure to read. You certainly accomplished a lot of things through your lifetime and we certainly do appreciate you coming here today and enlightening us.

Before we get into questions, you touched on one thing that disturbs me and that is that the peacekeepers are better known outside Canada than inside. I think that we have a responsibility, all of us, to promote peacekeeping and to make the people more knowledgeable of what Cornwallis is and what the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre is all about.

I will open the floor to questions.

The honourable member for Kings North.

MARK PARENT: I just wanted to echo your comment in terms of why you think the media haven't picked up on the 50th Anniversary that you are going to be celebrating. Also, I was interested, I worked in Kingston for some eight years, and there was a very innovating program run out of the Royal Military College, civilians looking at strategic studies. I am wondering how you relate to those efforts across the country? Finally, I will ask you this privately, who is teaching your course on human rights and modern peacekeeping?

That is just a personal question I will ask later. I just don't want to forget. It is really, why are you not getting the publicity that you deserve and then how do you relate to these other endeavours across the country. Are you the main peacekeeping operation for the whole country? Do you relate to these other programs. The Royal Military College is the one I am best aware of.

ALEX MORRISON: Mr. Chairman, I would imagine, knowing just a little bit about the work in which each of you is now engaged, that you are quite aware that bad news and negatively critical news is much more attractive than is positive news. We regularly send our material to the media and we regularly attempt to involve the media in all of our activities, to ask them to come to observe, to watch our courses and to role play in our courses. We have a little bit of success, but not as much as we would like. I think it is a function of the fact that good news does not sell as well as news of the other kind. However, we continue to try to obtain recognition and we will continue to do so.

With regard to the 50th Anniversary, I think it hasn't garnered much attention because most people focus on 1956 when Lester Pearson invented peacekeeping, at the time of the Suez crisis and are not aware that the term has been applied retroactively to cover missions in India, Pakistan, and the Middle East. However, we are going to be very active in the national media in the next couple of weeks and we hope that some attention will be devoted to it.

We are Canada's peacekeeping training centre and we are recognized by the Government of Canada, in particular the Department of National Defence and the Department of Foreign Affairs as a significant agent in the development and promulgation and assessment of Canada's security and defence policy.

With regard to the Royal Military College and other organizations, we have memoranda of understanding with a number of groups. For instance, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, with UNICEF, with L'Ecole Nationale d'Administration Publique in Montreal and also the Royal Military College accepts our courses for credit in their political science, history, international affairs organizations. Yes, we do keep in contact with all of the universities across the country and all of the strategic centres.

Our human rights course is taught by civilian and military experts in the field of human rights under the guidance of people from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, with whom we met in Newfoundland about a year ago when she was on a trip to Canada. As with human rights, all of our courses are taught by civilian and military experts in the field. I might say, with regard to human rights, and having served 34 years myself in the Canadian Army, the military in Canada and most of the militaries around the world have accepted virtually unquestioningly, the importance of human rights these days.

It has come to the fore, and I have been very pleased by the way with which militaries around the world have accepted the necessity of devoting attention to human rights.

MARK PARENT: Could I just follow up with one more and then I will be quiet, Mr. Chairman?

THE CHAIR: Go ahead.

MARK PARENT: In terms of your relationship, you said you are branching out beyond peacekeeping in regard to military forces. What success are you having? For example, right now I can think of conflict resolution being incredibly important in what is going on in Seattle and one can see more and more the need for conflict resolution that is much broader based than just military operations. Even in the Legislature, we could use some conflict resolution now and then.

ALEX MORRISON: Mr. Chairman, conflict resolution of the type that has been described forms part of our very wide and very deep definition of peacekeeping. We completed, last year, a neighbourhood facilitators program in Bosnia. We brought people to the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, taught them how to be neighbourhood facilitators and then sent them to Bosnia where they sat down in little storefront operations and tried to help people solve very low level concerns but which, to the people, were very great concerns.

As I mentioned, also, the business of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and the work with the League of Peaceful Schools and we are now discussing with various school organizations in the Province of Nova Scotia to be able to bring principals, teachers, and school staffs to the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre for short seminars in negotiation and mediation. I recognize, of course, the validity of the reference to what is happening in Seattle.

THE CHAIR: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

JERRY PYE: I guess, Mr. Morrison, living in a military community, or Maritime Command area such as the Halifax-Dartmouth area, one is very familiar with the role of Canada's Armed Forces in peacekeeping. I agree with you that maybe there is not the kind of knowledge around exactly what the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre does and how in-depth the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre goes toward bringing about peaceful resolutions throughout the world.

I recall back a few years when, in fact, there was a conflict in Haiti and some RCMP personnel were sent to Haiti, I do believe, to participate in the peacekeeping programs there. I guess my question to you is, do you go much further in scope than just simply military and civilian, that, in fact, national police services are also involved in the peacekeeping roles?

[9:30 a.m.]

ALEX MORRISON: Mr. Chairman, yes, absolutely. All of our courses are attended by civilian and military people. A great many of our courses are attended by RCMP personnel. We have a number of RCMP officers on our external faculty. Our external faculty is some 300 people from around the world on which we draw and we bring to Cornwallis and we are now developing a special course for civilian police that will be given in West Africa. It came about as a result of the francophone summit which was held in a city not far from here in September. We have also cooperated with the United Nations in conducting a seminar about three years ago at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre about recruiting, training standards for civilian police who wish to go to peacekeeping. As you know from reading the Chronicle-Herald a few days ago, there are a number of officers from the Halifax Regional Municipality police force who are heading off to Kosovo next week. We are also doing further work with the RCMP with regard to training of police.

You specifically mentioned Haiti. Our advanced course, our four week course, which we conduct twice a year, goes to Haiti and the people on that course see the society that is prevalent in Haiti, the conditions that are there and how the international community, through the peacekeeping mission in Haiti is trying to help. Indeed, a team has just returned from Haiti, a team of two people. One was Sally Armstrong, about whom there is a very large article in today's Globe and Mail, the former Editor of Homemakers Magazine. Sally Armstrong was one member of the team and the other member was a retired American Lieutenant General, Joe Kinzer, who at one time commanded the U.N. forces in Haiti. They went down there to look at the situation three or four years after General Kinzer had been there, to consult with Haiti government officials with civilians who are working in Haiti and with the civilian police who are there to determine whether there is anything that Canada can do to help the situation. We have just recently received Sally's report and Joe's report and we will be reviewing that to see whether there are things that we can do.

JERRY PYE: My final question to Mr. Morrison, I guess, there would not have been much difficulty in selling Canada as a peacekeeping nation and a nation who has some expertise in peacekeeping simply because since 1950, I think, Canada has taken on that kind of a leadership role and, in fact, historically Canada has been recognized as a peacekeeping nation although during the Second World War we did have strong armed forces and an armed forces which we could be particularly proud of, that defended itself and nations during that war. After the Second World War, in fact, Canada did become a very strong peacekeeping nation.

ALEX MORRISON: Mr. Chairman, I, of course, do not speak in any way for the Government of Canada, but I might like to mention that the position of the Government of Canada is that the Canadian Armed Forces are general purpose, combat trained personnel ready to fight in a war to defend Canada and to respond to the government's bidding. The government

also believes that the best Canadian military peacekeepers are general purpose, combat trained personnel and I can testify from experience first-hand in a peacekeeping mission, from visiting many peacekeeping missions, most recently in Kosovo, Albania, Macedonia and Bosnia, and from the experiences of others, that the best military peacekeepers are those who are trained to be general purpose combat soldiers. That is indeed why the Canadian military professionals are respected all around the world. Of course the same goes for civilian peacekeepers, that they are professionally trained as well and it is this Canadian professional attitude of getting on with the job, of not brooking unwanted and unwarranted interference that makes Canada sought after by the United Nations and by other international organizations to engage in peacekeeping.

THE CHAIR: The honourable member for Cape Breton East.

DAVID WILSON: Mr. Chairman, a few questions if you don't mind. Mr. Morrison, I am interested in what you were saying about the civilians who were attending the Peacekeeping Centre, especially with the comments you made in reference to teachers and so on, you think there might be an opportunity there to do some conflict resolution or whatever, but first of all I would like to ask you, how many Nova Scotians have actually gone through the Peacekeeping Centre? Do you have an idea of how many?

ALEX MORRISON: No, I do not, but knowing the number of Nova Scotians in the Canadian Armed Forces, and I meet with everybody who comes to the centre individually and in small groups, it is a fair percentage, but I do not know. We can find that out. Well, it would be hard to find out. We can find out the ones who are living in Nova Scotia now, but if Jack Smith from the University of Alberta comes and he used to live in southwest Mira, we would probably never know that.

DAVID WILSON: It is just as a matter of curiosity. Before I get on to what I mentioned about teachers and so on, I noticed in your literature that your two week course cost is approximately \$2,300. Could you explain that cost and how you come up with that figure?

ALEX MORRISON: Mr. Chairman, when we began we had a certain amount of money from the federal government, and we realized that we needed to raise more money on our own. One of the ways to raise money, of course, is by charging for our courses. We came up with the figure; in 1995 it was \$2,000 and now it is \$2,300. In that figure is included, transport to and from the Halifax Airport, tuition, materials, participation in all events and accommodation and meals for a two week period. So it works out to a very low daily rate.

We have recognized that there are a lot of civilians, a lot of non-government people, who might not be able to pay that \$2,300, which is why we have a very ambitious and a very extensive scholarship program. We have never turned down any person who wanted to come to the centre because that person did not have the money. Our scholarship program is very extensive.

DAVID WILSON: A couple more questions still on the issue of funding. It is 100 per cent aside from your scholarship money, aside from tuition money and so on, it is 100 per cent funded by the federal government?

ALEX MORRISON: I think in this fiscal year we raised an amount of money from other sources, equal to about 35 per cent of the money we received from the federal government.

DAVID WILSON: I guess what I am trying to get at is, is the Peacekeeping Centre on a solid financial footing right now? Will it be around for awhile?

ALEX MORRISON: Mr. Chairman, yes, the centre is on a solid financial footing. We have a five year commitment from the Government of Canada. We have been regularly examined by agencies on behalf of the Government of Canada which have given us very clean bills of conduct and who have said that we conduct our affairs with absolute probity and there is no reason to suggest, and I have received no indication at all to suggest, that when our current funding mandate runs out that it will not be renewed.

DAVID WILSON: One final question and to get back to what I had mentioned earlier. You mentioned teachers possibly attending the Peacekeeping Centre. What can be done to take advantage of that sort of thing and, again, would it not be a hindrance if you are charging \$2,300 for a two week course for your average Nova Scotian school teacher to say I would like to take that two week course and learn about anger management and conflict resolution from some of the experts around the world? How do you foresee that playing out, so to speak? With teachers, we have a number of ways to assist them and to educate them in conflict resolution and indeed in everything we do. First is through the League of Peaceful Schools, when the schoolchildren come to Cornwallis, with them come teachers and parents and so the teachers receive the benefit that way.

As I indicated previously, people on behalf of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre are now discussing with various regional education authorities in Nova Scotia the possibility of principals, teachers and staff coming to Cornwallis. They would come for a two or a three day period, a specially designed course, which would have an entirely different fee structure, one which would be much more to their liking and if there is any teacher, and there have been some, from anywhere in Nova Scotia, or anywhere in Canada, or anywhere in the world, who wants to come to our course, the cost of tuition will not be an insurmountable obstacle.

THE CHAIR: The honourable member for Cape Breton The Lakes.

BRIAN BOUDREAU: Mr. Chairman, I guess the first thing I want to do is congratulate you for your success and your efforts towards peacekeeping. The question I have is, I am interested to know if you have a relationship with the Royal Canadian Legion?

ALEX MORRISON: Mr. Chairman, we do not at this time have a formal relationship with the headquarters of the Royal Canadian Legion and that is simply for the reason that when we began, the first thing we did, we said let's get the courses up and running and let's get the people in. Then we went to universities and established the relationships and we went to other organizations and we are now proceeding to establish a formal relationship with the Legion, we hope. However, we do have a very good relationship with the Legions in our area; Bear River, Clementsport and in Annapolis Royal. One or two or more of them, or people associated with them, have indicated that in the future they think they are going to be in a position to help sponsor people from Canada and around the world to come to the PPC. So we hope to establish that in due course.

BRIAN BOUDREAU: That is the only question I have, Mr. Chairman, thank you.

THE CHAIR: The honourable member for Kings South.

DAVID MORSE: Good morning, Mr. Morrison. It is nice for you to come in here this morning. You have certainly brought a lot of background material and that is always helpful and perhaps an indication of the time that you put into preparing for this morning. I have a few, hopefully short, questions. Getting around to the military and peacekeeping which is going on all over the world and our Forces are taxed to their limit or perhaps beyond their limit today, but I am curious as to whether those people who have recently been sent to East Timor, do they automatically go to the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre's training courses before they are discharged to the areas of conflict?

ALEX MORRISON: Mr. Chairman, no, they do not automatically. The people who attend our courses from the Canadian military are in the minority, non-commissioned officers and above, and in the majority, from the Canadian Forces officers of certain ranks. We have had discussions with various officials at National Defence headquarters, discussions which have elicited very sympathetic responses, that those who are posted overseas to various missions, to NATO, to the UN and York and to other places, ought to come to the PPC preferably before they leave so they know what we do and that we give them a little bit of information, but then also we want to make use of their talents when they come back. An awful lot of people who return from peacekeeping missions come to the centre to instruct other people.

However, incidentally, because of the number of people who do come to the centre - in East Timor, for example, a number of the people in the headquarters of the Canadian Contingent have either been on courses at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre or have taken part in other Peacekeeping Centre activities, other PPC activities in Canada. Now, for example, there is a military organization in Kingston, Ontario, which is Headquarters First Canadian Division, which is to undergo a name change in the next year, and we hope that members of that headquarters, who may be called upon to be the first deployed if Canada undertakes

another peacekeeping mission, will come to the centre for formal training. So although we don't do it in the way you asked, that is the way we would like to do it.

DAVID MORSE: Understandably so. If we have such a distinguished institution world-wide, it would seem reasonable that perhaps we practice what we preach first at home.

Just a couple of other short ones. I have always been amazed how when you get situations like Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia, the Middle East, that the warring factions, somehow or other, seem to be able to identify their adversaries. How do you deal with this? When the United States was in South Vietnam, one of their biggest problems was the Viet Cong because they were, in essence, amongst them. How do you instruct the people who go into these areas in distinguishing between the various peoples, ethnic groups?

ALEX MORRISON: Mr. Chairman, that brings up a very important point which I had not mentioned and that is the one of training and education in ethnic distinctions and in cultural distinctions in cross-cultural training. In some of our courses, a lot of time is spent on cross-cultural training so that the Canadian civilian and military peacekeepers, and those from around the world who go on these missions, are well aware of the cultural distinctions and what the differences are in those countries, as the differences are in our countries.

Now when peacekeepers go into a theatre of operations where there are two or more parties to the dispute, of course one of the first things they do is insert themselves in the middle, between and among the parties to the dispute, to try to separate them. That is exactly what Mr. Pearson said we should do in 1956 when he invented peacekeeping. When our peacekeepers, civilian and military, are deployed to a theatre of operation, of course they receive briefings on the ground.

If you think of any area in the world to which military peacekeepers might be deployed, there are already civilians there, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, UN agencies, international committee of the Red Cross. So when the military come and more civilians come, they receive the information from people on the ground. In a theatre of conflict, it is relatively easy to determine, maybe not so much who the parties to the conflict are in matters of detail, but where they are because they are usually shooting at one another so you find the point where the bullets come together and that is where the peacekeepers have to insert themselves.

DAVID MORSE: That is a couple of questions and perhaps, if there is time, I will have some more.

THE CHAIR: The honourable member for Preston.

DAVID HENDSBEE: I think it is very ironic that we have the peacekeeping training centre here today because just yesterday was the kick-off day for the 14 days in December

peace campaign. Basically, their theme is Gentle Ways Are Best in trying to promote peace in our families, peace in our neighbourhoods, peace in our communities. Just last night we had various tree lighting ceremonies along the eastern region of Halifax, from Sheet Harbour, Musquodoboit Harbour, Ship Harbour, Jeddore, Porters Lake and even in Lake Echo last night we had over 250 people show up in the storm. It was incredible the amount of community turnout for such a symbolic gesture of the peaceful ways campaign.

My question in regard to your presentation was about your involvement with the League of Peaceful Schools. I have one school in my area, the Bell Park Academic Centre, which is enrolled in this program. I would like to know more about your involvement with that. How can schools become involved with the League of Peaceful Schools and what is your involvement with that and how that can be promoted more in the schools? Do you come to the schools and make a presentation? The second part of that question is, in my area I also have significant high schools - Cole Harbour High School and Auburn High School - that have situations, perhaps, that peacekeeping seminars could be very helpful in those school environments.

ALEX MORRISON: Mr. Chairman, we have mentioned, before, the League of Peaceful Schools. Now the League of Peaceful Schools, in the Province of Nova Scotia, is the brainchild of Hetty Van Gorp who was a school principal here in the Halifax area who is now continuing full time, looking after the League of Peaceful Schools and who is supported, it is my understanding, to a very good extent in that by the Department of Education of the Province of Nova Scotia.

First, before I get back into the League of Peaceful Schools, there is the matter of what we do other than that. I have mentioned our neighbourhood facilitators program in Bosnia and I have mentioned the work that we have done with local communities in Guatemala, in Bosnia and most recently in Kosovo. Then, of course, there is the work that we do in our negotiation and mediation course.

Now the League of Peaceful Schools, an undertaking by Hetty Van Gorp in partnership with the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre and for one year with a major Nova Scotia business, which unfortunately is no longer associated, but now it is the League of Peaceful Schools in association with the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, that signs up and enlists schools all across the province and there is some indication that it is now going to expand to Florida. There is some indication it is going to expand to Ontario, this idea coming from Nova Scotia.

Now from time to time, groups of schoolchildren come to the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre. About three weeks ago, 80 schoolchildren came together with a number of parents and a number of teachers for three days of classes in how to foster compromise and consensus. Today there is a League of Peaceful Schools ceremony somewhere in the Halifax area with Heddie van Gorp and with Robert Hamilton, my Vice-President at the Pearson Peacekeeping

Centre. It is a ceremony involving the League of Peaceful Schools. So any time that any organization in your constituency or in any other constituency throughout the province wishes League of Peaceful Schools material, they can contact the league itself, or failing that, can contact the PPC and we will ensure that you receive speakers and the material that you need.

DAVID HENDSBEE: My second question is in regard to the possible future initiatives in applying lessons of peacekeeping and peaceful conflict resolution. I was wondering what involvement do you plan to have with the various cadet corps or the senior Boy Scouts and Girl Guides or RCMP Rover programs? I think those are probably some key groups that you can probably affiliate with.

ALEX MORRISON: Mr. Chairman, at this time we have not established contact with navy, army or air force cadet corps or with the other organizations, the Boy Scouts. We have done some work with the militia in training them in various techniques of peacekeeping negotiation but we have not, as yet, made contact with these other organizations. However, given our mandate and the way we interpret our mandate, I see no reason for not doing so.

MARK PARENT: A question that David Morse asked and also a comment you made, and this may not be fair with the media here, so you can refuse to answer it if you don't want to. You stated that combat-ready troops were, in your opinion, the best individuals for peacekeeping and yet our troops, by and large, don't have to go through the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre. If combat-ready troops are the best people for peacekeeping, what has gone so wrong with Canadian peacekeeping efforts, I am thinking particularly of Somalia? As I said, it may be an unfair question which you may not want to answer but it certainly seems to me that if we have this peacekeeping resource, the individuals don't have to go through it, if that policy was changed, it would be one way of ensuring that Somalias don't happen again.

ALEX MORRISON: Mr. Chairman, it is my understanding that it is the position of the Government of Canada that the best military peacekeepers are general purpose combat trained soldiers and I certainly agree with that, and that the best civilian peacekeepers are those who are professionally trained in a wide range of talents, skills, abilities and capabilities. Let me also say that the Government of Canada and the Department of National Defence fully support the work and intentions of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre and regularly send a large number of people from the Forces on our courses. I might also point out that all Canadian military peacekeepers are trained for a number of months before they are dispatched overseas.

I might also say that having worked at the Canadian Mission to the United Nations for six years and having kept in contact through visits and other means with civilian and military government officials and private individuals around the world, that the reputation of the Canadian military in peacekeeping is undiminished. If anything, the reputation of the Canadian military in peacekeeping continues to grow. What people around the world take heart from is that Canada is continuing to engage in peacekeeping, indeed we have more troops deployed

abroad now with a force of 60,000 than we had when the Canadian military was 120,000, which testifies to the professional and hard-working dedication of these very capable men and women.

I might also like to say that people from around the world take heart from the fact that we have established the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, which shares this half century of Canadian experience and expertise with civilians and military around the world. I might also say that people around the world take heart from the fact that Canada learns from its mistakes.

Canadians, although our country has been voted number one in the world by the United Nations for the last seven years, really do not have a superiority complex. Canadians realize that they are fallible in many ways, and that when mistakes are committed by Canadian citizens, whether they wear uniforms or not, that we learn from them and we try to build on that. That is really my impression and my knowledge from dealing with people around the world. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Eileen O'Connell.

EILEEN O'CONNELL: Mr. Chairman, I just have one question. Mr. Morrison, does the peacekeeping centre have any kind of relationship, formal or informal, with what I would call the pacifist groups, like the Voice of Women for example, the groups that engage in peaceful protests and perhaps civil disobedience? In other words, do you have any kind of an informal or formal relationship with them? If you don't, do you desire one? Regarding that, do you have any posture or stance institutionally towards that kind of citizenship activism?

ALEX MORRISON: Mr. Chairman, our definition of peacekeeping, as I have said, is very wide and very deep. It encompasses everything from interpersonal conflict resolution through classical peacekeeping which is the insertion of military people in between warring parties, to Chapter 7 operations under the United Nations Charter, to democratization, to post-conflict reconstruction and development.

We have activities in all of those areas. We also believe that we ought not to confine our activities to one geographical area of the world, that we ought not to confine our activities to one age group, because, really, if we are to make the world more peaceful, more secure and more stable, if we are to accomplish the true aim of peacekeeping, which is the saving of lives and the alleviation of human suffering, then we have to have a very broad approach.

The programs of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre are open on a fee basis and on a scholarship basis equally to any citizen in any country of the world who wishes to take part in our activities. We have had people representing virtually every constituency of people who are concerned with peace, security and stability in very specific ways or in very general ways.

We also regularly send representatives of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre to meetings to which we are invited, and we are a member of a committee which meets two or three times

a year in Ottawa, which has a very wide constituency. I would think, Mr. Chairman, that the answer to the question is yes.

EILEEN O'CONNELL: I am not sure I heard that yes. My understanding of what you said, and correct me if I am wrong, is that the mandate is so broad that it is inclusive of them. My question would be, then, have they participated in any way, if you know? Is it something that they find a place in? Do you see a place for them, do they find a place there?

ALEX MORRISON: Mr. Chairman, when I was a member of the Canadian Mission to the United Nations for six years, for most of the 1980's, my specific job was arms control and disarmament, international security and peacekeeping. I was the point of contact for most organizations and individuals who came from Canada to New York, dealing with international security.

[10:00 a.m.]

I met and formed good acquaintanceships and some friendships with people from all parts of the spectrum. That is continuing today, and we have had - although I can't tell you the number - people at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre from pacifist organizations. Yes. I may say also, just very generally, that we have never turned away anyone. Indeed, we have been very forthcoming in trying to make our programs known to anyone who is interested in any aspect of making the world more peaceful.

DAVID MORSE: Mr. Morrison, I think you gave my colleague, Mark Parent a very diplomatic answer when he asked you about Somalia. It is interesting that he asked you the question, because that was also something that I had down here which I was really alluding to with my question about having peacekeepers go through the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre before being sent into conflict areas, and the problems, basically cultural; language is another one which we have not talked about. You mentioned 125 countries, well they probably are not all English-speaking countries.

Having spoken to a few of the veterans who have come back from Somalia, they come back wide-eyed, and they talk about the culture shock and the absolute different value system. In your diplomatic way, in response to Mark's question, you basically confirmed, for me anyway, that if perhaps those troops had had the use of such a service back at that time that maybe Somalia would never have taken place.

ALEX MORRISON: Mr. Chairman, first I might say that at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, we conduct courses in English and in French, in both official languages of the country. Second, with regard to culture shock and with specific regard to Somalia, Somalia was a number of years ago and has been the result of many inquiries, investigations, reports and statements.

It is my understanding and indeed my firm knowledge that the Canadian military, since the time of its deployment in Somalia, has taken a great many steps to deal with the lessons that were learned there. One of them is the sending of people to the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, but also within the Forces themselves, there are many programs that deal with the outcome of what happened in Somalia.

DAVID MORSE: So an active example of how the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre actually advances the true cause of peacekeeping by preparing the combat-ready soldiers that are going into that theatre for what they may find, which is not what they know here in Canada.

ALEX MORRISON: That is absolutely right. We have people who regularly make statements such as this: a person in uniform, at the end of the course, will say to the person who is a civilian, and finding out that both of them were in Rwanda, if I had known that you were there, if I had known what you can do, if I had known how we could cooperate, think how much more effective we would have been. And the civilians say that to the military.

Then on another level, because each of our courses has people from 15 or 20 countries, some like ours, some not like ours, at the end of the course, someone from here would say to someone from another country, if I had known before I went peacekeeping someplace else what your country was like and how you think and how you operate, just think how much more effective we would have been.

Every time I welcome a course to the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, I say you are going to learn the subject matter of the course and that is very important, but you are also going to learn about one another and you are going to learn one another's biases and prejudices and you are going to learn how to tolerate them and you are going to learn how to deal with them. That is one of the great benefits of bringing people from around the world to the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, is that people learn about one another and our environment at Cornwallis is so good for learning because we have our own accommodations. We have our own dining room. We have our own lounge. So they work together in the classroom. Then in the lounge they meet people from the local community and they sit there for hours at night, until 9:00 p.m., 10:00 p.m., just talking.

In the early days, in 1995, there was an awful lot of this with military people. Where were you five years ago? An awful lot of people found that in the late 1980's and earlier they had been facing one another across the Iron Curtain. Yet here they were in Nova Scotia working and learning together to bring more peace to the world and so what it is we do in a specific course is important, but what is equally as important is what the participants gain from being with one another for two or four weeks.

DAVID MORSE: I have just one last point which I would like to bring up. This is perhaps being respectful of those soldiers who have gone into a theatre of war although it may

not be a declared theatre of war. You made reference to the Gulf War, which I believe is not recognized as a war by Canada. I have material that indicated some of the problems that have led to the Gulf War syndrome and you also mentioned post-traumatic stress syndrome may have in fact come from, in the case of the British military, at least according to what has been sent to me, that they used depleted uranium tips on their ammunition for its armour-piercing ability. Well, we just lost a Nova Scotian this year by the name of Terry Riordon and he was contaminated with depleted uranium. I have a friend that is showing similar symptoms who is back from Croatia and I guess I would just like to have your comments on how we recognize some of the problems from our peacekeepers and how we as a society are attending to them?

ALEX MORRISON: Mr. Chairman, throughout the past few years, since April 1995 when we began operations, we have noticed from time to time some people who come on course, it has been discovered, are suffering from the stress of the peacekeeping operations in which they had been engaged. From time to time we have put them in contact with the appropriate military authorities here.

We also offer a course on personal relations on stress for peacekeepers and how to deal with it. I also know that the Canadian Armed Forces is paying very great attention to the procedures that need to be followed to deal with peacekeepers when they return from these theatres of operation because it is a fact that not only do they deal with environmental hazards, but in peacekeeping operations in East Timor and in Kosovo and in Bosnia, for concentrated periods of time these peacekeepers are in situations which are exactly the same as situations in which we found ourselves in Korea and in the Second World War; that is to say that some activities included under the peacekeeping umbrella are really low intensity or mid-intensity conflict. I think that the Government of Canada and the Department of National Defence has been very quick to recognize this in the number of programs and the attention being devoted to returning peacekeepers is very great.

DAVID HENDSBEE: Mr. Chairman, I would like to bring this back from more of a global to a local perspective and more about domestic peacekeeping efforts. From time to time we hear of situations here at home, either in this country or in this province, of crowd control, protest containment and stuff like that. We have had the G-7 here. We see what is going on right now with the World Trade Organization meetings in Seattle. We see protests wherever the Prime Minister is going now and we have First Ministers Conferences from time to time and we also have the local native fishery disputes and stand-offs down in the southwestern Nova Scotia area.

I want to know if there is a protocol in place at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, are they ever used by the military, or the regional police forces, or the Coast Guard, or DFO officers, as a consultant or strategic advisers on various logistics for preparations in dealing with these domestic situations when they arise from time to time or would there be a role that the PPC can play in advising these various forces, be it military, police, or departmental officers

in peacekeeping sensitivity training in how to best go into a situation like that on a domestic front?

ALEX MORRISON: Mr. Chairman, I think that the answer to the question is no. We do not and have not trained military, or DFO, or RCMP, or other organizations in crowd control or riot control. We have, however, from time to time provided facilities where people can come, sit down and discuss how to deal with these things and, of course, through regular attendance on our courses, such as our course on peacekeeping negotiation, people learn those techniques, but we have not been involved in that type of detailed training, no.

THE CHAIR: Are there any more questions? Thank you very much. Mr. Morrison, I just want to say that you have certainly enlightened us in the peacekeeping role and what Cornwallis stands for. I thank you for coming. You certainly will have a speech in the Legislature in the spring along with a resolution, I will assure you of that now. We will coordinate that together through all the Parties - the Liberals, the NDP and the Progressive Conservatives - to make sure that you do get better recognition and better recognition for Nova Scotia and Canada because the service that you people are providing is probably one of the most essential services in the world today. We all know that we will have our skirmishes, probably not have another big war, but we will all have pockets throughout the world and I guess that is a fact.

I know that Canada provides the number one role of peacekeeping and, as you said, it is the most sought after, the peacekeepers in Canada are the most sought after in the world and the job that the peacekeepers are doing in Canada is second to none. It is unfortunate that maybe one single thing tarnishes the peacekeeping role in Canada when they provide many good things, but we have to concentrate on the good things they are providing and the countries, the United Nations recognizes Canada's role. We, at the Veterans Affairs Committee do. Again, I want to thank you very much for coming.

BRIAN BOUDREAU: Mr. Chairman, can we pass a motion perhaps, what you suggested before, that the resolution will be presented by yourself on behalf of the committee and allow the time for a speech to be presented in the House in the spring?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

BRIAN BOUDREAU: I will make that as a motion.

THE CHAIR: We have a motion by Brian Boudreau, Cape Breton The Lakes, that we pass a resolution in the House and also a speech to recognize the contributions of the peacekeepers, seconded by David Hendsbee, the honourable member for Preston.

Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Who do we have coming next?

DARLENE HENRY: Well at this point we don't have anybody coming in. The witness that we had coming in for January 13th is now postponed until February 24th and then after that we should formulate another set of witnesses. We have depleted what was put forward from the original meeting.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. We have Mr. William Gibson, prisoner of war. He will be coming in February 24, 2000. So our next meeting will be scheduled for February 24, 2000. At that time perhaps we will go through a list for other witnesses.

DAVID MORSE: Mr. Chairman, could I bring something up for consideration in terms of a future witness?

Following up on my comments to Mr. Morrison this morning about how we are treating our peacekeepers, or I should say, perhaps how our federal government is treating our peacekeepers, there certainly is a discrepancy, I think, between the perceived treatment and the actual treatment by many of them. Terry Riordon - maybe if I could just read this to the committee. It is not that long.

"Canadian Veteran of the Gulf War . . . ", this is from a U.S. veterans group, ". . . died this am . . . ", that being dated April 29th. "Terry was clinically diagnosed with Gulf War Syndrome. He also had weapons grade DU in his body. Terry lived in Yarmouth Canada and has been suffering for many years.

Our Canadian brothers and sisters have an even harder time getting help . . . the Canadian government doesn't recognise the Gulf War as being a 'war'. Approximately 4500 Canadian Forces men and women, representing all three environments, participated in the 1990-91 Gulf Conflict. Canada was one of 35 nations involved in the UN-sponsored, US-led coalition effort to liberate Kuwait. The Canadian Forces played an important role in this effort and their contribution has been duly recognized. Canada's participation in the conflict was pursuant to United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 678 (1990), which authorized UN members states to 'use all necessary means to uphold and implement' previous resolutions relating to the Iraq invasion of Kuwait. Resolution 678 was adopted under Charter VII of the UN Charter which permits such action as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such action is not considered 'war' in international law or policy.

Thanks Canada - so no Gulf War - where do those who served this Country with pride, dignity and honor fit in now they are ill? Over half of the Canadians that served in the Persian Gulf Conflict are ill, some mild, moderate and dying.

Terry's wife, Sue Riordon, is an advocate for many Veterans, from the Persian Gulf and other areas. Where she can assist - she has, as a volunteer basis. She is also the appointed Nova Scotia Chairperson for Canadian Peacekeepers Veterans Association.

For the Riordon family . . . my prayers and thoughts are with you, I pray for your comfort, and for all of us." This is from the representative in the United States for the veterans. I guess what I would like to suggest is that since Sue Riordon has basically become virtually a full-time volunteer advocate for all veterans, that we afford her the opportunity to come in and talk about her work.

THE CHAIR: Where does she live?

DAVID MORSE: Yarmouth.

BRIAN BOUDREAU: I will second that, Mr. Chairman. Is that a motion?

DAVID MORSE: Yes. If you would entertain it, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIR: We have a motion . . .

JERRY PYE: A question on the motion, Mr. Chairman. You say it is Sue Riordon?

DAVID MORSE: Yes.

JERRY PYE: Is she a member, or is there an association or an organization that lends itself solely to the purpose of the Gulf War syndrome?

DAVID MORSE: No, she is not confined specifically to the Gulf War syndrome.

JERRY PYE: Is there an association that specifically addresses that particular issue? Is there a group across the country or in Nova Scotia or whatever, of individuals who have come back experiencing this syndrome as a result of partaking in the Gulf War? They may not have been necessarily peacekeepers but people who have actively been involved or sent there by way of the Canadian Armed Forces. Is there an association and/or an organization that speaks on their behalf?

DAVID MORSE: I am not sure of a specific organization. Her representation is a more general one.

JERRY PYE: Yes, I heard that.

DAVID WILSON: On the question, Mr. Chairman, I am wondering here whether or not we are starting to step outside of our mandate as a Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. This is in no way to diminish what the member is talking about or what it concerns, but there

are a lot of people out there who have a lot of stories to tell. Are we going to ask them all to appear as witnesses before the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs?

THE CHAIR: Would you like to . . .

DAVID MORSE: I would like to respond to that one. I think in view of what is going on in terms of Canada's role as international peacekeeper, that we not only should hear from a spokesperson who is representing many of these people but we have an obligation to listen to them because we give them a voice by coming in here. I think that based on some of the stories that have been told to me, not so much by Sue Riordon but stories about her work from other affected veterans, that we should understand what is going on and that we have an obligation.

DAVID WILSON: Mr. Chairman, if I may, we are a provincial Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. I am not diminishing what Sue Riordon has to say or what would add to this but I am just wondering how far we are going to take our witness list and in what direction we are headed. That is simply what I am wondering.

THE CHAIR: The next meeting on February 24th . . .

JERRY PYE: Mr. Chairman, we have a motion.

EILEEN O'CONNELL: There is a motion on the floor.

THE CHAIR: We have a motion. Is there any further discussion?

JERRY PYE: I would just like to make a comment in support of Mr. Morse. I believe he is right and it is not the first time that this committee has acknowledged areas of concern that are within the federal jurisdiction. We can't tell the federal government what to do but we can certainly suggest and put our voice forward and this committee has done that in the past and hopefully it will continue to do it in the future.

DAVID HENDSBEE: In regard to the comments by Mr. Wilson, I would just like to state that this committee is very unique in its mandate because it is one of the very few provincial Legislative Assemblies that has such a Committee on Veterans Affairs because it is normally considered a federal matter but with the military traditions and culture of this province, we have recognized that through the Legislative Assembly and I am in support of the motion because I think if a person of this calibre and efforts ought to be heard and recognized . . .

DAVID WILSON: I didn't say she wasn't, Mr. Chairman. I didn't say that for a moment.

DAVID HENDSBEE: You were just saying to the point that, how broad . . .

DAVID WILSON: I certainly did not say that she wasn't supposed to appear before this committee . . .

DAVID HENDSBEE: . . . will our witness list be and I think that we should afford her an opportunity to come forward.

DAVID WILSON: Mr. Chairman, in response to that, and I would like it to show on the record that I certainly did not say that Sue Riordon should not appear before this committee. I questioned the mandate of the committee and where we are headed with it and if this involves Gulf War syndrome, as Mr. Pye was suggesting, is there a legitimate organization out there that represents Gulf War victims and should we not hear from them, then?

DAVID HENDSBEE: I think she would be our best witness to tell us if there is not.

DAVID WILSON: I don't know that. Maybe that is something that we should look into first.

THE CHAIR: We have a motion.

BRIAN BOUDREAU: Call for the question.

THE CHAIR: Question, to have Sue Riordon appear before the Veterans Affairs Committee at a future date. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The next meeting will be on February 24, 2000, at which time Mr. William Gibson, a prisoner of war, will be our witness. That will be at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 24, 2000. Thank you all for coming.

[The committee adjourned at 10:26 a.m.]