

*Human Rights*

and then say that we can announce this in the City of Montreal or in another city, where the Government is desperate to save seats.

Let us face it, in the City of Montreal the Government is desperate to save seats, and it has created the location not because of the concern for the over-all development of human rights and democracy, but simply to pork-barrel, and I, as a person who has a moderate interest in human rights issues and who was involved as a Liberal critic, am distressed that the Government would not consider the issues of human rights in deciding where the most appropriate place would be to locate the centre for human rights. They would rather resort to crass political considerations.

It is not the first time that it has happened. You have a problem, create another institute! That will solve it. Who are we trying to kid?

We will all pass this Bill today and everybody will go home and sleep a little bit sounder tonight knowing that we have created the international centre for human rights and democratic development.

Frankly, with the budget that we have been accorded, with the fact that the decision for the centre was made not to create or to build on a body of excellence that already exists, but merely to pork-barrel, I think it is a bit of a farce. I want to know why we have spent our time over the last number of weeks in Parliament dealing with what I consider to be pork-barreling attempts by the Government to buy votes in a pre-election period. It would be far better if an institute of this importance were given an appropriate budget and located on the basis of an analysis of the body of expertise and experience that exists in the human rights community. Why not make that decision in the fullness of time as opposed to rushing it through so the Government can wave around another campaign promise?

● (1710)

Frankly, I am a little surprised and dismayed at the attitude of members of the NDP, the sanctimonious, holier than thou Party that is dragging up the history of the War Measures Act to justify the location of the human rights institute and then says in the same breath that they consider it pork-barreling. I consider that this has the potential to be an extremely important arm of Canadian and international democratic development. It is unfortunate that, in the course of this Government, much of the work that is going to be done by this centre has been abdicated by the Government. Our role in international aid, in foreign affairs, and as an adjunct to the foreign policies of the United States of America has diminished us in the eyes of the world community.

It used to be that, as Canadians, we could hold our heads high around the world because we were well respected for being able to maintain and sustain an independent foreign policy, and to be able to encourage the establishment of human rights and democracy in many centres and areas around the

world that currently have not enjoyed the type of democratic rights that we have in this country.

Last week the President of the United States called the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) a visionary. Can you imagine that, Mr. Speaker? Ronald Reagan calling Brian Mulroney a visionary. At the time I said: "My goodness, that statement alone will cost the Government thousands of votes". That statement comes from a man who, by the admission of his own advisers, was almost ruled incompetent during the course of his administration in the United States because they were so concerned about his handling of foreign and domestic affairs, and he is calling our Prime Minister a visionary. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada have travelled lock-step in their assessment of foreign policy. Remember the Philippines. Was it not Canada that spoke first to recognize the Government of Corazon Aquino and to recognize what many of us had known for many years, namely, that Ferdinand Marcos was an unabashed dictator? We waited and waited to see what the United States did.

It is unfortunate that the centre for human rights and democratic development will have to assume much of the work that should have been done by the Government. The Government has abdicated its role of arm's length foreign policy from the United States, and we are lock-step now in terms of the economy. In the area of regional development we have to consider what the United States will say before we can give money to Sydney Steel or do anything to support Algoma. At the same time as we are moving lock-step in the area of economic policies, social and foreign policy will follow suit.

That is why the Government has had an extremely ambiguous position on the question of Star Wars development. It did not come out against Star Wars development. The Prime Minister stated that the Government cannot get involved because it is too expensive, but the private sector can go to it.

Furthermore, let us look at the record of the Government in human rights in respect of exporting of arms and equipment that is being used to crush democratic developments in other countries, to sustain and abet regimes that depend on the use of force to sustain themselves, and on the use of military force. One of the first acts of the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) was to loosen the regulations on exporting arms to other countries, and exporting arms to countries that were on the forbidden list.

It was not until it was raised by the Liberal Opposition in committee, and raised by human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, that the Minister realized the error of his 1985 amendment and changed the legislation or the regulations governing the control of the export of arms to prevent countries such as South Africa and other regimes from using Canadian armed military goods and ancillary goods, including helicopter equipment, from being used against the democratic process. We were actually supplying arms indirectly to South Africa, a country that the Prime Minister