

Adjournment Debate

Saanich (Mr. Munro) has pointed out, that Czechoslovakia will demand a Czechoslovakian passport of Canadian citizens. In order to get that they have to swear allegiance to Czechoslovakia. If they are servants of the Canadian Government, for example, how can they swear allegiance to this country when they take out a citizenship, and also give an oath when they take office as a public servant, and then go back to Czechoslovakia and swear allegiance to that country? That is the kind of dilemma facing some Canadian citizens.

● (1805)

My point yesterday, Mr. Speaker, was simply this. Now that we are in a negotiating position with a country, why do we not score some points and require some concessions from that country that will provide some security for Canadian citizens born in East Germany? Then when they want to return to the land of their birth to visit relatives or simply to see their birthplace they will have some security in that that country will not be able to demand those things which other countries are demanding at this time.

I would like the person who is responding today to clear the record. Are we negotiating with the German democratic republic? If we are, would the Government give us, and those Canadian citizens who were born in East Germany, the assurance that if we are establishing that relationship there will be assurance that when they return to visit the land of their birth they will not be required to take an oath of allegiance or be branded as criminals by that country?

[Translation]

Mrs. Suzanne Beauchamp-Niquet (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I should like to remind the Hon. Member for Surrey-White Rock-North Delta (M. Friesen) of his question yesterday to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). He precisely asked whether the Right Hon. Prime Minister, and I quote:

—could confirm that the Government is planning in the near future to extend diplomatic recognition to East Germany, the German Democratic Republic?

To which the Right Hon. Prime Minister's reply was:

No, Madam Speaker, I cannot confirm that.

Then, I suggest it is quite clear. If I may, Mr. Speaker, I should like to provide the House with a little background information. Canada recognized the German Democratic Republic in 1972. Yet, it was only in 1975 that Canada agreed to diplomatic exchange with the German Democratic Republic. In 1977, ambassadors at large were accredited for the first time from Warsaw to Canada and from Washington to the German Democratic Republic. Bilateral political consultations between officials took place in 1977, 1979, 1981 and 1983, so that a bilateral trade agreement was signed as recently as September 9, 1983, by the Hon. Senator Hazen Argue, Minister of State. This bilateral agreement had been preceded by major sales of Canadian grains to the German Democratic Republic. It was then agreed that after our bilateral exchanges

have developed, we would consider opening permanent diplomatic missions in Ottawa and East Berlin. As no final decision has been made concerning that, the Right Hon. Prime Minister replied yesterday to my hon. friend opposite that he could not confirm that Canada is about to extend diplomatic recognition to East Germany. Yet, I can confirm today that there are continuing discussions aimed at drafting a memorandum of agreement calling for reciprocal conditions similar to those we would grant the German Democratic Republic when we decide to open a permanent mission in East Berlin.

The opening of a German Democratic Republic mission in Ottawa hinges, as my hon. friend opposite surely knows, on the results of these negotiations and a ministerial decision.

● (1810)

[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS—CZECHOSLOVAKIA—DUAL NATIONALITY
ISSUE

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, my question as recorded at page 86 of yesterday's *Hansard* concerned dual nationality, particularly as it refers to national Canadians of Czechoslovak origin. What concerned me particularly was the practice, of which I have been made aware, of an enforced resumption of Czechoslovak citizenship by such Canadians who perhaps had come here as refugees from an oppressive regime—not just the first generation but the second and even into the third generation of those persons of Czech nationality—as a prerequisite of being able to visit Czechoslovakia to see their relatives.

This enforced resumption of Czechoslovak citizenship consisted in particular of swearing a new oath of allegiance to the communist regime in Czechoslovakia despite the fact that those persons had chosen a new head of state in the person of Her Majesty, the Queen, to whom they had sworn allegiance. Now, to fulfill a completely understandable family urge to visit a grandmother, uncle or niece, they must swear allegiance to their previous head of state, a communist president. As nearly as we can make out—and this was only 1977—there have been some 1,100 Canadians of Czech and Slovak origin who were admitted to Canada as refugees who have since been obliged to reconfirm their allegiance to the regime in Czechoslovakia from which they fled, and have had to do this in order to visit the relatives they left behind in Czechoslovakia.

That is not all; far from it, unfortunately. Among these 1,100 Canadians who had to reaffirm their allegiance elsewhere, a fair number are employees of the Crown. Some of these Canadian public servants have been known to travel to Czechoslovakia on Czechoslovak passports. Does this not strike the Government as not only odd but unacceptable?

Indeed, not very long ago the House gave first reading to my Bill to amend the Canadian Citizenship Act so as to remedy this abuse. What I proposed in that Bill—and I shall seek to reintroduce it this session—was to deprive citizens of their Canadian citizenship if, while under no disability, they declared allegiance to a country other than Canada. That was Bill C-650, given second reading on April 6, 1982.