

*Routine Proceedings*

changes now occurring in the Soviet Union and the great significance they have for that country's future.

President Gorbachev was acutely aware of the difficulties he faces in implementing *perestroika* and *glasnost* successfully. He is, above all, a realist.

But I was struck by his determination to succeed and by his confidence that success is possible. He considers the course that he has set for transforming the Soviet Union to be right and irreversible. I believe that he is correct.

I also believe, strongly, that it is in everyone's interests, including our own, that he succeed.

[English]

The changes that he is seeking to provoke within the Soviet Union are profound and pervasive. *Perestroika* is not simply about improving the economic performance of the Soviet Union, although that is both urgently wanted and very badly needed. An important new law dealing with economic reform is to be tabled by mid-December. I think Mr. Shevardnadze advised the Secretary of State for External Affairs that it would perhaps be on December 12.

*Perestroika* is about establishing a new political order based on greater individual freedom and responsibility and on more democratic institutions. *Perestroika* is about establishing a new political order based on greater individual freedom and responsibility and on more democratic institutions. It is about putting into place a whole new economic structure, based on a greater role for the market, on productivity growth, and on individual motivation and individual reward. It is about designing a new social system and instilling a new way of thinking into the Soviet consciousness based on fundamental attitudinal changes, on diminishing dependence on the state and on greater creativity of thought and independence of action by the individual. President Gorbachev told me that "The revolution we have embarked upon is above all a revolution of the mind, of people's mentality".

• (1130)

Resistance to change runs deep in the Soviet Union. In my judgment, there is no viable alternative to Mr. Gorbachev's plan or to Mr. Gorbachev himself. In politics, change often comes suddenly and with little warning. In public life, no one is indispensable. To the

extent, however, that anyone is indispensable to the ongoing well-being of his own society, it is probably President Gorbachev because of the overwhelming extent to which the entire agenda of reform is identified personally with him, both at home and around the world.

Our discussions also covered in frank detail domestic developments in the Soviet Union that are of great interest to the Canadian people: human rights, religious freedoms, emigration, the rights of nationalities and the very nature of the Soviet federation. The Soviet Union has made very encouraging progress on all of these matters since Mr. Gorbachev came to office.

The fundamentals of the Soviet system are being questioned, often in publicly televised debates by newly-elected deputies and by ordinary citizens throughout the nation. Prominent dissidents and political prisoners have been released from detention and many have been allowed to leave the Soviet Union. For the first time, unofficial groups not connected with the Communist party are being tolerated and encouraged. Permission to emigrate from the Soviet Union, in particular by citizens of the Jewish faith, has increased greatly in recent years, so much so that there is, today, no backlog of family reunification cases between Canada and the Soviet Union.

A new emigration law is now being considered by the Supreme Soviet. Our hosts assured us that it is consistent with the standards on population movement established by the Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe. The Soviet authorities also intend to put into place more relaxed regulations on secrecy restrictions which, as we all know in this House, has been the root of many of the remaining "refusnik" cases. I had the opportunity in the Soviet Union to visit briefly with some Jewish refusniks who seek to emigrate to Canada and to Israel.

New regulations on emigration will soon be followed by a new law on religious rights, expected to be submitted to the Supreme Soviet in the near future. We were assured that it would provide the basis as well for a new relationship between church and state in the process of dealing with many of the concerns raised by the Secretary of State for External Affairs and by myself last week over the treatment of the Pentecostal Church and the Ukrainian Catholic and Ukrainian Orthodox