

Human Rights

Public opinion polls that were taken at that time showed an overwhelming majority of people in Canada who believed that the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) had the proper facts and that he was doing the right thing. I can recall friends and associates and supporters in the general public who, in many, many cases, could not understand why we voted in that way. But I am proud to say that of the 20 members of the caucus present, 16 of us summed up enough courage to vote in the proper way.

Mr. Prud'homme: The 10 minutes is not over. I am just glad that my hon. friend put on record that some voted against it. Otherwise, the way he put it, if it would not have been challenged, it would make them look good. My father always taught me that you do not calculate virtue. You are virtuous or you are not. If some people happen to say, well, you know, some of us did it and some of us did not do it, then there is no more virtue, really.

Mr. Nystrom: I guess virtue is in the eye of the beholder. I spoke for myself and I spoke for, I guess, 80 per cent of my NDP colleagues, because 16 Members voted against invocation of the War Measures Act. There were only four that voted against it. The three that were not there issued statements saying that if they were in the House they certainly would have been voting against the invocation of the War Measures Act as well.

I hear the Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps). I suppose in those days she was probably out there in support of the invocation of the War Measures Act. As I said before, I think it is appropriate to have the centre located in Montreal.

Ms. Copps: I thought in most cases the Member for Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom) was free of the political gamesmanship that often goes on in this place. I would like him to specify specifically. I do not have any particular axe to grind. There is no particular reason—or maybe he can give me a reason—why this particular institute should be placed in Montreal, other than for pork-barrelling. I would like to know if he can give me the reason as to why this institute should be located in Montreal.

Mr. Nystrom: As I said, the only reason that I can think of that made it slightly appropriate was that it was the centre of the crisis back in 1970, which was the October crisis. I suspect that the principal reason is that it is being created for pork-barrelling reasons, for political reasons. The Conservative Party is in very, very serious trouble in the City of Montreal. I suspect that, if you carried out some public opinion polls, you would still find the Conservative Party running probably third in the City of Montreal.

In addition to the human rights centre, I would not be surprised if the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) announced within a week or so that the space agency is also going to be located in the City of Montreal.

Mr. Prud'homme: Are you against it?

Mr. Nystrom: I suspect that those are the real reasons. I am not against that at all. I am just making a prediction that the space agency will be announced by the Prime Minister as to the land in the City of Montreal. But that will not be done until probably the first or second week of the campaign.

Mr. Prud'homme: There is one minute left. May I ask my hon. friend where we stand on the space agency? Are you in favour of putting the space agency in Montreal? A yes or a no.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: This is not related to the Bill. On debate, the Hon. Member for Hamilton East.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I had wanted to speak to some of the elements of the Bill. Frankly, I guess I am getting a little bit cynical. In the last week we have passed more institutions around this place. It seems to me that with the budget that is being given to this institution, it is a farce. It is a joke when you consider that, with a budget, the first fiscal year of the centre is going to get a \$1 million budget.

There are people in the Third World right now who are dying by the millions of starvation, and this centre that is supposed to be promoting human rights and democratic development has a total budget of \$1 million. Who are we trying to kid?

Furthermore, with respect to the location of this so-called international centre for human rights and democratic development, I cannot understand it, because having previously sat as the Liberal Member on the Human Rights Committee, I do not have a particular axe to grind for any community that has the knowledge in the area of human rights, or an expertise.

I know that when I needed to get expertise, I went to the University of Ottawa, the Human Rights Institute, which was the only institute of its kind in Canada that had developed a knowledge base and an expertise in the area of human rights. I assumed that when a Bill of this nature is going to be implemented, at the very least there should be consideration as to what educational base, what knowledge base, exists in the country, and where that can best be implemented in terms of such a centre. But it seems, just like the decision that was announced yesterday in the United Nations with respect to another community, that the Government does not make decisions on the locations of institutes on the basis of what is going to be best for the institute and for the country. The Government makes those decisions on crass political bases.

I have not seen as crass a political base as the suggestion that other centres of excellence, like the City of Ottawa, should not be considered for the human rights institute. I have not seen an analysis which shows me that the knowledge base that exists in the City of Montreal should be the best place for the institute. Perhaps that exists, but it seems that it was pulled out of the blue.

We are going to spend a million bucks, create another institute, give the Government another campaign platform,