

*Adjournment Debate***TRUCKING INDUSTRY**

There are still problems to be settled in Azerbaijan where human rights violations continue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. I apologize for interrupting the hon. member, but are you making a statement? I do not understand your speech. Have you a question for the government?

Mr. Attewell: I do but I wanted to outline the importance of the trip and this independent movement. I do want to ask, in terms of the human rights violations in Azerbaijan, can the parliamentary secretary tell me if that is being dealt with expeditiously?

Mr. Benno Friesen (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to congratulate the member from Markham for the opportunity to represent Canada during the vote that will be taken in Armenia during this week, actually on September 18. It is a delight for all of us who have enjoyed democracy for so many decades and centuries to see these people, who have suffered the scourge of totalitarianism and communism for so many years, experiencing now the light of freedom in their lives.

• (1820)

Along with that, I might add, how energized we are to see what is happening in the Baltic states and the independence that those people in the Baltics are enjoying now after having been denied the democracy that is so rightfully theirs for these 50 years.

I am pleased to say that the government has chosen to send the member from Markham to Armenia to make sure that the human rights violations are, if possible, non-existent, that a vote is honest and accurate. The minister just very recently met with members of the community in Toronto, just 10 days ago, to assure them that Canada is on their side. Wherever there is an opportunity for people to experience the flourishing of democracy and free speech, free thought and free action, we want to be with those people.

I therefore wish the member Godspeed and hope that what he experiences there is unimpeded democracy during the vote that will be held just a few days hence.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the minutes available to me to review in this Chamber a question I had the opportunity to pose to the government, namely to the Minister of Transport, on May 14, 1991.

If we cast our collective minds back to that period, we will remember that instead of the Public Service union protesting outside Parliament's door today, it was truckers from across the country, particularly from the province of Ontario.

Truckers came to Ottawa because they are literally being run off the road by American competition. We, on this side, are not saying that a Canadian trucker and a Canadian industry cannot have the technology and the will and the determination and the work ethic to compete with their American counterparts. But what we are saying is that because of the size and the differential in the size between the American and the Canadian trucking industry, the fuel costs, the depreciation costs, the tax structure costs, it is simply an unlevel playing field.

To simply sit back, as this government is doing, and say to the Canadian truckers and the industry that they should not worry but should go out there and compete in the name of free enterprise, is irresponsible.

It is also irresponsible to promise something and do absolutely nothing. The predecessor to the current Minister of Transport last summer in Windsor, when they had a blockade, said that he was going to take the issue to cabinet and that he was going to make the financial changes required for the trucking industry to compete. He then said he was going to study all the factors and unleash a series of seven task forces to study the industry inside out and report back with the intention of ushering in some action and some much reform and change.

Where is the change? Where are the modifications? On April 22, 1991, I wrote the minister to say that we were getting another series of blockades because another year had passed by and nothing had changed. On April 24 we appealed once again to the minister who basically did not lend us or the trucking industry his ear nor that of his government.