

dom and implementation of the spirit of the seventh article, as I recall it, in the Final Act of Helsinki. This is what Monsignor Silvestrini had to say, and I am quoting from page 5 of this statement:

Mr. Chairman, to be sure anyone, I personally did too, whoever took part in the laborious formulation of the Final Act could never think that the signing of this document although a gesture so solemn, of such commitment, could lead to immediate over-all modifications, almost spectacular ones. However, it was clear immediately that the spirit of Helsinki could not fail to demand in the first place that every area of liberty, recognized, even to a limited extent, in the laws of various countries, the rights of individuals and social groups, that this area of freedom should be preserved and protected and no longer reduced or compressed by rules and regulations.

Indeed the truly important aspect of the Final Act beyond the actual immediate application registered so far in every country lays in the very impulse given to a progressive motion, although laborious and too slow in some places for the people's expectation, towards an irreversible development of an ever broader liberty.

As regards religious freedoms it is an undeniable fact that the Final Act said "go" to this positive process although it is still at the start. This is, in particular, sufficiently clear as regards circulation and meetings of person and communications from country to country.

Indeed, there have been confirmed encouraging developments in this field as far as we are concerned, by the various churches and various denominational grounds. But in particular, as regards the Catholic church, of which I am particularly competent to speak, it is satisfying to note that a certain number of positive facts without doubt have been proved. Above all, there has been recorded a broader flow, a fairly steady one, of travel facilities for religious motives. Travel for bishops to come to Rome for their visit "ad limina" (as we know this is a visit which should be made every five years to the Pope by the bishops, and this year indeed it includes the turn of the European countries), or also for travel for bishops and other ecclesiastics to attend important meetings of the Holy See, or participation by monks and nuns in the general chapter of their order, or other conventions in Rome, or other places in Europe and America; or again, participation of bishops, priests, groups of the laity in major international manifestations of a religious nature; like the Holy Year which took place at Rome in 1975, and the International Eucharistic Congress of Philadelphia in 1976—or for pilgrimages to European sanctuaries, both east and west. Furthermore we can note more frequent meetings and exchanges of visits among representatives of the Episcopacy of various countries, more numerous concessions for priests who have emigrated to visit their own families at home, and a certain number of young ecclesiastics who have been sent to take study courses in cultural theological university institutes in Rome and elsewhere.

In the same way in the field of means of communication and information, we can record the concessions given to religious communities to print locally a certain number of prayer books and catechisms, the authorization given to send some thousand religious publications (gospels, bibles, catechisms) or liturgical publications (missals, ritual for the administration of the sacraments, breviaries for priests and religious) or works of piety, to catholic communities who previously could neither print nor import; furthermore, the now unhindered reception without interference for some radio religious programs, like the Radio Vatican broadcasts.

These measures, which we stress with satisfaction, correspond to commitments in the Final Act and have begun to modify—even though it is but partially so far, and not to the same extent everywhere, a previous situation which in the field of communications and relations from one country to another, was previously one of rigid and discouraging frustration.

Monsignor Silvestrini goes on to say:

—it is more arduous, more delicate, and more complex, to speak of religious freedoms within the States. Here appeals, testimonies, requests, continue to multiply, sometimes with anxiety and urgency, because the situation in several regions is still far from a normal life of sufficient freedom.

● (1722)

There are particular complaints of difficulties concerning religious practice of certain categories of persons, difficulties for religious education of young people,

Bibles

restrictions concerning the training of candidates for the priesthood, restrictions of freedom in pastoral action for certain bishops and priests.

This completes my quotation from the statement of Monsignor Silvestrini. I would be more than happy to make the full text of the statement available to the hon. member for Fraser Valley West.

The Canadian delegation in Belgrade played a very active role between October and March when the conference took place. The delegation was outspoken both in public, in committees and in plenary session, as well as in private conversations with delegates from other countries, particularly those from the Soviet Union and eastern European countries. I had the opportunity for such conversations on a number of occasions. On one occasion I showed a Soviet delegate a brief prepared by a group of citizens on the question of religious freedom and pointed out to him the shortcomings identified by that group.

I note that the motion before us was put forward on November 3, 1977. Just a few days before that, on October 31, the head of the Canadian delegation at Belgrade made a major intervention on the subject of human rights. I should like to quote part of what he said on the subject. He dealt with problems being encountered in the area of religious freedom and said:

Why is it that in 1977 we are hearing complaints that members of religious groups in a few participating states are constrained from practising, alone or in community with others, a religion or belief in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience' as specifically provided for in the third paragraph of the seventh principle, and in paragraph 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? Why are there charges that in some participating states the practitioners of certain religions—in particular Jews and Baptists—are subjected to especially severe restraints in the exercise of their communal religious life notwithstanding official constitutional guarantees that all citizens shall enjoy freedom of religion? Examples of this penalization are the prohibition of organized religious instruction, restrictions on private worship, communal, social and fund-raising activities, harassment at church festivals, restrictions on the importation of religious literature and even the prosecution and imprisonment of believers, especially those advocating more religious freedom. Why are contacts between practitioners of the same religion living in different participating states sometimes discouraged or prevented, despite the fact that in the third chapter of the Final Act it is explicitly stated that 'religious faiths, institutions and organizations, practising within the constitutional framework of the participating states' can have such contacts? These matters are of real and continuing concern to many Canadians . . .

One of the objectives Canada had at the Belgrade meeting—and it made this clear early in the meeting—was to get participating states to agree to facilitate normal communication of ideas and information between individuals, particularly through the freer flow of printed material. This objective included religious information. This objective was put into concrete form as a western proposal that Canada co-sponsored, by which governments would take the following action:

express their intention not to impede the satisfaction of the demand existing on their territory for the newspapers and printed publications, periodical and non-periodical, from the other participating States and will to this end avail themselves of the ways and means set out under the heading 'printed information' including, inter alia, the development of the possibilities for taking out subscriptions.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the motion before us speaks of individuals being permitted to transmit religious materials. At Belgrade the Canadian delegation put particular stress on the