

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, August 12, 1987

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 21

[Translation]

THE CONSTITUTION

OPPORTUNITY TO AMEND MEECH LAKE ACCORD

Mrs. Lucie Pépin (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, in answer to a question I directed to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Hnatyshyn) yesterday concerning the equality of women and minorities in this country with respect to the Constitution and the Meech Lake Accord, the Minister of Justice responded by urging me to consider my position and added that, according to Government legal advisors, the rights of women are not in any way diminished by the Meech Lake Accord provisions. Allow me to differ, and I am not the only one because a number of constitutional lawyers share my view.

Again I want to ask the Government to bring in an amendment to clarify this text. Naturally I am somewhat surprised that the Government would not take appropriate action because one must remember the saying: Where there is a will, there is a way. I think this is a very important question about which the Government should do something.

I would simply point out that if women are left to take this matter into their own hands the Government might very well have a surprise, as was the case in 1981.

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[English]

WAR CRIMINALS

SUGGESTED REFERRAL OF BILL C-71 TO COMMITTEE

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary East): Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Government will be courageous and just and use due parliamentary procedure to send Bill C-71 to a legislative committee after second reading, and at the same time follow the recommendations of the Deschênes Commission.

Our majority Government should show Canadians that we are not only interested in dealing with past war crimes from

the Second World War but also with those current ones being committed in Afghanistan, the Middle East, Cambodia, and Central America, as well as crimes against humanity which might occur in the future.

Twenty years from today we would not want hindsight to show Canadians that our motives for bringing in this legislation were wrong.

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● (1405)

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CENTRAL AMERICA—SUPPORT URGED FOR PEACE PLAN

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, in a remarkable achievement the Presidents of the five Central American republics have agreed to a broad peace plan for their tragically troubled region. This plan, introduced by the President of Costa Rica and within the context of Contadora, should be enthusiastically endorsed by Canada.

Canada has long supported Contadora and Latin American solutions to the crisis in Central America. Canada should offer verification resources, funding, and other support for the implementation of the plan and any cease-fire and military disengagement.

Canada should offer to observe any cease-fire, as well as any future elections, if invited to do so. Canada could also offer to host the urgently needed resumption of bilateral talks between the United States and Nicaragua. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) has clearly stated that Canada opposes the supply of arms to any faction in the region. Canada should continue to make this clear, and in particular should object to any renewed U.S. funding for the Contras.

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HISTORIC EVENTS

ANNIVERSARY OF BATTLE OF DIEPPE

Mr. Lee Clark (Brandon—Souris): Mr. Speaker, although for many people August is traditionally a holiday time when public issues are often ignored, I sincerely trust that Canadians will pause for a moment to remember that August 19, 1987,