

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 1, 1985

The House met at 2 p.m.

● (1405)

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 21

[English]

PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS

ONTARIO ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Mr. Speaker, the voters of Ontario are shocked to learn that the Premier of their province is using intimidation and threats to win support in tomorrow's provincial election. He told the residents of Simcoe that only by electing Progressive Conservatives would they be assured of getting fair treatment from the Tory Government, if it is to be re-elected, and God forbid it should.

The Premier said that the area which elected two Liberal Members in the last election would continue to be neglected unless it was painted blue. This is inexcusable behaviour for a man who calls himself Premier. It is blatant discrimination and shows the desperate attempts of a candidate who, in the final days of a campaign, has gone from promising to bullying. It brings to mind the behaviour of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) when he warned that there would be jobs for Liberals only after there was not a single, living, breathing Tory left in the land.

Canadians are in fact protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms against such threats and overt discrimination as we have seen practised not only by the Prime Minister but by the Premier of Ontario. In light of all this, I think the Minister of Justice (Mr. Crosbie) should review these extraordinary threats, and advise Parliament how the constitutional rights which have been given to Canadians, and which the Minister is sworn to uphold, can be fully protected against such threats.

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CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

SALE OF MALVERN LAND CONTAMINATED BY RADIOACTIVE WASTE

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada owes some home owners in Malvern, Scarborough, the price of their homes which they were sold under false pretences. In 1972 CMHC sold land in Malvern, Scarborough, to the Ontario Housing Corporation, land which it knew was seriously contaminated by radioactive waste. CMHC knew

that Ontario Housing Corporation would sell the land for housing purposes, and it did so under a program with the cynical name of "Home Ownership Made Easy".

Unsuspecting families bought these houses and only later learned that they were the owners of a radioactive waste dump. Their children play on contaminated soil, and noxious fumes leak into their basements. Home prices have dropped disastrously. These home owners appealed to their Member of Parliament, the Hon. Member for York-Scarborough (Mr. McCrossan), last fall, but it seems that he has done nothing about this mess.

The previous federal Government cheated these home owners, with or without the connivance of the Conservative Government of Ontario, by concealing the fact that the land was poisoned before it was purchased. I call on the Minister of Labour (Mr. McKnight), who is responsible for housing, to buy out those homes at a fair market price.

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[Translation]

REVENUE CANADA

INCOME TAX DISCOUNTERS

Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the House to a situation that has existed for a number of years, and which I find deplorable. I am referring to the tax discounters. The number of Canadians who avail themselves of the services of these discounters has almost doubled in two years. In 1983, 118,000 people used the services of these companies, while in 1984, their number rose to 274,000.

The customers of these discounters are poor people, mothers of single-parent families and welfare recipients. In fact, 64.5 per cent of these customers who must give part of their tax refund to the discounter have a gross income of less than \$8,000 per year. We can safely say that the victims of this system are among the neediest in our society.

Furthermore, the 15 per cent interest that may be charged by tax discounters works out to an exorbitant rate when calculated on an annual basis. In fact, it means that on an annual basis, these organizations may charge up to 90 per cent interest. This should not be tolerated, since Section 305 of the Criminal Code protects Canadians by prohibiting interest rates over 60 per cent, and even that is excessive.

According to the Association coopérative d'économie familiale du Québec, people go to these companies because they