

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 3, 1986

The House met at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 21

[English]

HUMAN RIGHTS

U.S.S.R.—NON-DELIVERY OF FAMILY GIFTS SENT BY CANADIAN RELATIVES

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, now that the gift-giving season is here I would like to draw the Government's attention to a situation that continues to distress and frustrate Canadians who are trying to maintain contact with family and friends in Eastern Bloc countries.

It is a sad fact that a person in Canada who sends a simple, inexpensive gift as a token of affection to an elderly parent, or to a dear friend in the U.S.S.R., must be prepared to have the package returned by the Soviet authorities, without any explanation of why it was not delivered.

This is not a new situation, and since there are obvious human rights implications I would urge the Government to use all possible means to remind Soviet authorities of their obligations under international human rights agreements, and to work for improvement in this particular situation.

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● (1405)

DISASTERS

DAMAGE CAUSED BY FLOODING IN LAKE ST. CLAIR-LAKE ERIE AREA

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, this week 1,200 homes were hit by flooding in my constituency and along Lake Erie. This tragedy is a warning of worse flooding to come in the whole Lake St. Clair-Lake Erie area.

Just last week the International Joint Commission agreed that it was possible to fight the flooding. As the Great Lakes Coalition stressed, dredging and capital works in the Niagara River can significantly lower water levels.

Back in April the Minister of the Environment (Mr. McMillan) promised coalition representatives that he would act. However, nothing has happened. I believe strongly that a man-made solution to the flooding exists. I tell the Government that it must act now to achieve it.

HEALTH

THREAT CAUSED BY AIDS EPIDEMIC—NEED FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

Mr. John Oostrom (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, the Panos Institute, a London-based research group which specializes in Third World issues, concludes that AIDS could wipe out half the population of some African countries. The impact of such a tragic occurrence will be devastating to African countries.

Canada must be concerned about the pending catastrophe. If the virus were to become more infectious, it could threaten human existence the world over. The strains which such an epidemic would impose upon our health system and facilities would be equivalent to the results of an atomic war.

Canada would have to impose immigration AID tests. Canada must make AIDS research a major priority, for if we only pay lip service to this festering problem, the results could be devastating to Canada.

Canada has the facilities, the personnel, and a track record in medical research to help find a solution. Banting gave the world the cure for diabetes; the same can happen for AIDS. Let us all support drug patent Bill C-22 which will provide research funds for a future AIDS cure.

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[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

FORGET REPORT—EARLY RETIREES—OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE SPEEDY DECISIONS

Mr. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Jonquière): At long last, Mr. Speaker, after spending 17 months to study, to hold meetings and to analyze briefs, the Forget Commission is about to release its report. It will now be up to us as Government Members to listen to the people and give serious consideration to the recommendations aimed at improving the unemployment insurance system.

Mr. Speaker, our Government had also given the Forget Commission a mandate to examine the thorny issue of early retirees. As Member for the particularly hard hit region of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, I can tell you that I had an opportunity to meet with a number of early retirees. They drew my attention to the fact that this legislation has been harmful to them because they retired early with the conviction