

Racial Discrimination

be able to work together on the representations that will be put forward.

We have not heard anything from the Government regarding some aspects of the War Measures Acts, which had implications for Japanese during World War II. Some action should be taken in that regard.

The Hon. Member for Vancouver East (Ms. Mitchell) has raised the whole question of the Chinese head tax in this House. To date she has received well over 600 representations, some including receipts for the head tax paid by Chinese Canadians. I had hoped that the Minister might have responded to some of those representations. I know that various organizations, as a result of this matter having been raised in the House by my hon. friend, have also been writing to the Government making representations. The Chinese-Canadian National Council has talked about this head tax compensation request which was made by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Vancouver East. It views the head tax as among the most blatantly racist and shameful acts in the history of our country. I was hoping that perhaps on this particular day the Minister would respond to the representations made by my colleague. The Human Rights Commission also has issued a statement in support of the requests which have been made with regard to compensation for Chinese Canadians. I hope that the Minister will see that some action—

● (1520)

Mr. Speaker: The Chair hesitates to interrupt the Hon. Member, but the practice of the House has been that comments should not exceed the length of time of the original statement by the Minister. The Hon. Member has now exceeded the time of the original statement. Therefore, I hesitate, but I feel I should interrupt the Hon. Member.

Mr. McKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to point out that we did have a short debate on this subject several years ago in the House when Ministers adopted the habit of making extremely short presentations, thereby cutting off any real discussion on the matter. The Minister's presentation was very short today.

Mr. Speaker: Nevertheless, the Chair is bound by practices of the House. The Chair has not stopped questions. The Chair has simply called to the attention of the Hon. Member speaking that he has already gone beyond, something like two minutes beyond, the length of the original statement. The Chair is trying to be reasonable, but I would ask him to bring his remarks to a close.

Mr. Nielsen: On the same point or order, Mr. Speaker, I believe it is only fair to say that the Minister did speak with me prior to following the procedure we are now following with respect to making a brief statement. He expressed the hope that, after the same privilege had been extended to the spokesperson for the Conservative and New Democratic Parties to make a similarly brief statement, in this exceptional instance, because of the nature of the statement and the occasion, we would even refrain from asking any questions in the hope that

perhaps more statements will be made by Ministers in this slot in the future.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair is trying to be fair, and the hon. spokesman for the Official Opposition, the Hon. Member for Lisgar (Mr. Murta), did observe roughly the same limits as the Minister. I am inviting the Hon. Member for Dauphin-Swan River (Mr. Lewycky) to do likewise.

Mr. Lewycky: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to conclude by saying that we each have a ministry of reconciliation which we can bring about in this country. I hope that the Minister will take it upon himself to act upon these representations I have mentioned. When the report of the Special Committee on Visible Minorities is brought forward, I hope he would act immediately on these representations, as well as incorporate them in the Multiculturalism Act at the time it is brought forward.

Mr. Yurko: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I may have a chance to say a few words on this matter?

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Edmonton East (Mr. Yurko).

Mr. Bill Yurko (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief, but I would like to say a few words on this very important matter before the House because today is the International Day for the Eradication of Racism. This matter has been rather close to my heart. I have constantly asked myself what racism is. It is a most despicable form of hate and discrimination among mankind. Some of us have repeatedly indicated the need for the equality of man in the eyes of man.

All I want to say, Mr. Speaker, is that I was in Brunei recently to recognize the independence of that country. One of the people there made the most profound statement to me in terms of this question of discrimination between peoples of different colour, different race or different sex. He said, "I want you always to remember, Mr. Yurko, that we all have the same colour of blood".

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PETITIONS

MS. MITCHELL—TESTING OF CRUISE MISSILE ON CANADIAN SOIL

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present petitions from over 4,000 people who live in Vancouver East, including many that are written in Chinese. The attached petition states: that whereas residents of Canada are alarmed by the threat to the survival of humanity posed by the existence of nuclear weapons and the continuing arms race; and that whereas the Government of Canada permitted the testing of the Cruise missile over the soil of Canada on March 6, 1984, thus contributing to the nuclear arms race; and that whereas the following statement was endorsed unanimously by the United Nations in 1982: