

*S. O. 21*

[English]

**HUMAN RIGHTS****SOUTH AFRICA—PLIGHT OF POLITICAL ACTIVIST THERESA RAN ASHAMOLA**

**Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of New Democrats and I hope other Hon. Members of the House, I join in solidarity with thousands of Canadian petitioners as well as members of Socialist International Women from around the world in asking the Canadian Government to intervene to save the life of Theresa Ran Ashamola, a political activist in South Africa.

Theresa, aged 25, is the first black South African woman to be condemned to death as a political prisoner. She along with five others has been sentenced to hang for a politician's killing although she claims she had left the rent protest march before the killing took place. Many witnesses contradicted the prosecution witness who accused her.

Theresa has been subjected to torture and abuse by police since her imprisonment. I ask fellow Members of Parliament to join with me in sending telegrams of protest to the South African Government requesting that Theresa Ran Ashamola's life be saved and her appeal for justice be heard.

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**EXTERNAL AFFAIRS****OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED MILITARY ASSISTANCE FOR AFRICAN COUNTRIES**

**Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic):** Mr. Speaker, the statement by External Affairs officials that they are considering military assistance to states in southern Africa is almost unbelievable. The quicker they reject this ill-advised scheme, the better.

Canada has no business poking into African powder magazines with a lighted match. Any aid we give to African countries should be humanitarian, not military.

Canadians do not want African blood on their hands. I call upon the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) to reject categorically any military aid, lethal or otherwise, to Africa.

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[Translation]

**HUMAN RIGHTS****BRITISH COLUMBIA COURT JUDGMENT**

**Mrs. Lucie Pépin (Outremont):** Mr. Speaker, about ten days ago, the British Columbia Family Court made a ruling

which established a serious precedent and totally ignored the basic human rights we now enjoy in Canada.

This case involves a woman with a drug habit who was on the point of delivering her fifth child. She was arrested at a time when the authorities did not know that they were also arresting the child she was bearing. She went through surgery without her written consent. What was at issue was not whether she would be a good mother or would be able to care for her child. The ruling was made on the basis that the rights of child had to prevail against the mother's rights.

I ask the Department of Justice and the Canadian Bar to review this unacceptable ruling which threatens all future mothers in Canada because they could become the property of the state on the basis of a ruling by a judge if people around them object to their behaviour. They could also have to submit to surgery or pre-natal care imposed on them without their consent.

I therefore believe that it is important that the basic rights of women and future mothers no longer be threatened as happened in British Columbia, and I think that it is shameful for such rulings to be made in Canada.

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● (1405)

[English]

**THE ECONOMY****GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ASSIST PRAIRIE ECONOMY**

**Mr. John Gormley (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake):** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to note how the Government dealt with recent concerns of western Canada. With the prairie economy battered by depressed world grain prices, western Canadians spoke of the need for diversification of our economy. The federal Government responded by establishing a Western Diversification Office and injecting \$1.2 billion into the economy of western Canada.

When 48,000 railway workers went on strike, the Canadian rail network was completely paralyzed and threatened to strangle the western farm economy. The federal Government acted quickly and legislated the strikers back to work.

Those are just two recent examples of the federal Government's sensitivity to the needs of western Canada. This Government has a commitment to act quickly and responsibly in solving regional problems and concerns. It is clear—when western Canada speaks, the Mulroney Government listens.