

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

NEWSPAPER REPORT OF STATEMENT BY HON. FLORA
MACDONALD

Mr. Henri Tousignant (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I was a little upset about a recent statement by the Member for Kingston and the Islands, when she said there was room for opposing views on the controversial French language issue within the federal Progressive Conservative Party. Mr. Speaker, the Progressive Conservative Party ought to make up its mind once and for all, if it intends to be honest with the Canadian people. It seems to me the Party's Leader has already said he would never tolerate any dissent on such basic issues in his party. Perhaps the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party should take this opportunity to clarify the situation once and for all. Perhaps he could also tell us whether he intends to run in Central Nova, or in Quebec, or elsewhere. Here again, he does not seem to know where he is going. He is quite welcome to run in the riding of Témiscamingue, if he is short of alternatives. We are ready for him! I would therefore ask the Leader of the Official Opposition to tell Canadians exactly what his position is on these two issues.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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[English]

HUMAN RIGHTS

HOUSE OF COMMONS' REPRESENTATIONS TO U.S.S.R.

Hon. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton North): Mr. Speaker, over the years there have been several Motions under Standing Order 43, and now under Standing Order 21, dealing with the plight of political prisoners in the Soviet Union. Most of these Motions received the unanimous consent of the House for action to be taken. Would it be possible for the First Commoner, the Hon. Speaker, to give the House a name by name update on the results of these actions?

Some of the individuals involved have apparently not been granted any kind of reprieve, nor even a lessening of their difficult conditions of imprisonment, and most, if not all, are suffering from serious health problems. Some of these individuals are relatives of Canadian citizens and as such should receive consideration under the Family Reunification Program.

However, regardless of who they are, these persons have put their lives on the line in defence of the principles of human rights and deserve our continued support and intervention, for as Dr. Andrei Sakharov once said: "Without human rights, there is no détente—no peace".

Oral Questions

REFUGEES

REFUGEE STATUS CLAIMANTS—ORAL HEARINGS PROGRAM

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, for several years the Government has been delaying a decision on the question of whether to allow oral hearings for people who claim refugee status. There are now about 12,000 people in Canada claiming refugee status, and less than 400 of them have benefited from a pilot project initiated by the Government a year ago.

This pilot project has been dramatically successful. It allowed refugee claimants to be heard directly by one or more members of the Refugee Status Advisory Committee. It has shortened the administrative time from an average of about 15 months to an average of about two months, to the great benefit of refugees and in some cases of their families, and to the benefit of the Department which must bear the expense of staff work and maintenance work for refugee claimants while they are awaiting a decision.

The program has been strikingly successful, yet the Minister continues to delay giving a report. He has promised repeatedly to report on that project, and on the question of whether all refugees will be allowed oral hearings in somewhat the same fashion. However, to this day he continues to be silent on the subject, and has suggested instead that all matters relating to refugees should be the subject of yet another report by yet another—

Mr. Speaker: Unfortunately the Hon. Member's time has expired.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE ADMINISTRATION

LIBERAL PARTY LEADERSHIP CAMPAIGN—GUIDELINES ON USE
OF GOVERNMENT AIRCRAFT

Mr. Doug Lewis (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Who is it?

Mr. Lewis: Perhaps it is one of the nine. On April 11 the Prime Minister was questioned about the use of government jets by Liberal leadership candidates. He said on that occasion that any flight strictly or essentially taken for partisan political purposes should not be taken at public expense. Could the Acting Prime Minister assure the House that his Department or that of the Minister of Transport is enforcing those guidelines in the interests of Canadian taxpayers?

Some Hon. Members: Who is going to answer?