

S.O. 21

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 21

[English]

HUMAN RIGHTS

POSITION OF SOVIET JEWS

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, today we remind ourselves of our commitment to the fundamental principles of individual rights and freedoms for all people. Today is the third anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Sadly, we continue to witness violations of these high principles around the world, particularly in the Soviet Union and countries under its influence. Today is an appropriate moment to focus on the compliance with the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Agreement, adopted by 35 nations in 1975, including Canada, the United States, the Soviet Union, and countries of western and eastern Europe.

The signators pledged to respect "fundamental freedoms, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief". Of vital importance are the clauses on freedom of human contacts and the rights of reunification of families.

In preparation for the Ottawa conference review on human rights next May, and on this special day, it seems appropriate to bring to the attention of this House the worsening situation of Soviet Jews who wish to emigrate to rejoin their families, or to be allowed the right to maintain their religious identity in their homeland. It is important that our Canadian representatives impress upon the Soviet Union the urgent situation and the need to curtail the proliferation of official anti-semitic material. Jews are being harassed, not for what they do but who they are. December is the month of world-wide solidarity for Soviet Jewry. They need our Canadian support, our voice.

Mr. Speaker: I regret to advise the Hon. Member that her time has expired.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

PLIGHT OF HEBREW TEACHERS IN U.S.S.R.

Mr. Fred King (Okanagan-Similkameen): Mr. Speaker, I too bring to the attention of the House and the nation that today is one of significance to people of the world who acknowledge and value the rights of all individuals who collectively make up the human race. In this context, I make a statement on behalf of persecuted Hebrew teachers in the U.S.S.R.

December 10 is the anniversary of the signing of the international Declaration of Human Rights to which the Soviet Union is a signatory. On this human rights day, nine Soviet Jews stand accused of the crime of teaching Hebrew. This basic human right to transmit one's own language and culture is denied only to Soviet citizens of Jewish nationality.

Concerned Canadians across the country fast today in solidarity with hundreds of Soviet Jews who are now protesting with rotating hunger strikes, a courageous response to the Soviet authorities' latest campaign to destroy Jewish culture.

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PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN SASKATCHEWAN

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, the other day the Minister of Industry (Mr. Stevens) unveiled a new program called Investment Canada. He said this country would now be open for business. I want to give him some words of advice this afternoon. I hope he does not model this after Saskatchewan. Grant Devine, the Conservative Premier of our province, has a plan which he calls "Open for Business" as well.

What has happened in two and a half years has been a disaster for the people of our province. Unemployment has doubled in two and a half years, and the number of people on welfare has skyrocketed. Between April, 1982, and September, 1984, the number of people who are on welfare because they cannot find work in our province has gone up by some 73 per cent. The total case load of everybody on welfare has gone up by 22 per cent; 29 per cent in Regina, 33 per cent in Saskatoon, and 40 per cent in the city of Yorkton. Housing starts last year were down by 46 per cent. In agriculture, farm bankruptcies are up and farm income is down. In my province it is not open for business but closed for business because of this new program under the Conservative Government.

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INVESTMENT CANADA

NEW AGENCY WELCOMED

Mr. Barry Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, we have heard recent cries from opposition benches since forming the Government about jobs, jobs, jobs. As the reins of power are being handled with more and more gentle control, many young Canadians are wondering whether a new job creating confidence is evolving.

The pool of investment capital in our country is not deep enough to allow federal, provincial and municipal public sector appetites as well as private sector institutions, to swim successfully in it together. There will be no howls from Canadians who get back to a productive, meaningful life as fulltime workers when German, Japanese, British, Italian, French, American, Dutch and many, many more companies again feel that Canada is going to become a fitter place for investment.

There will be howls, with the very positive signal by the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion (Mr. Stevens) and the introduction of Bill C-15, the Investment Canada Act last Friday, that we are selling our souls to foreigners. One single word is what the unemployed youth of this nation have to bank