

Routine Proceedings

The spread of disease is another major issue that we must look at when we talk about populations. We have seen the spread of AIDS, how it started in Africa and what has happened since. We now have the plague in India and we see how quickly it has become a global problem.

We would like to emphasize the importance of the NGOs. They are on the spot, and in many cases understand the issues much better than governments do. Therefore, the promotion of the NGO community, helping with their funding as opposed to government to government grants is certainly commendable.

If we agree on all of these things then what do we find is the problem with the Cairo conference? What kinds of questions do we have to ask? Most obviously Canadians want to know if this was the best way to achieve the goals desirable in this world. One has to wonder just how much further we have come as a result of this conference and what will come out of it. What new and innovative matters were learned at this conference that we did not know before? Was a timetable established? Will that timetable be kept? Will there be action instead of just words?

Reference was made to the fact that a large part of the conference was the discussion of abortion. Both sides struggled to try to gain control of the conference. From a Reform Party standpoint we believe that abortion is up to the individual and not up to international bureaucrats.

Everyone agrees that increased wealth in countries leads to smaller families. Talks aimed at promoting open markets and economic diversification were really not discussed at this conference. While certain aspects of the economy were mentioned that did not seem to be leading to any concrete action.

We have to ask, was this a good expenditure of our funds? Canada sent a huge 28 person delegation to Cairo, including nine MPs. I was in Cairo last June. The tourism was great but we have to ask, did those 28 people have to go and what did they accomplish?

The estimated cost that we could find at this point was approximately \$235,000 paid for by foreign affairs. In addition in preparatory arrangements about \$2 million was spent on this conference. Canadians are asking questions about the cost. Why did we send that many people? Could this money have been spent more wisely in other ways? Was this conference simply a recipe for big government? The suggestion that more agencies should tell people what to do is the traditional western approach to global problems.

The Government of Canada should not be exporting political-correct agendas. The best way to help developing countries would be to promote open markets, economic diversification and development, and even more important, help improve educational opportunities for everyone around the world.

• (1025)

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-277, an Act to amend the Criminal Code (circumcision of female persons).

She said: Madam Speaker, this morning I am tabling my bill on the circumcision of female persons.

It is very important that the government give its support to this bill. We are all well aware that there is a movement in the world concerned with the issue of genital mutilation of females. That is why I encourage the government to support my bill.

We are well aware that this practice is carried on in Canada by immigrants to this country. The Cairo conference raised this important problem, one that is recognized by Egypt's population minister, who would like to see such a bill studied in the people's assembly of Egypt. I therefore hope that here in Canada, where we pride ourselves on our progressive stance in the area of legislation, we will move ahead, and that my bill will be debated and passed in this House.

(The motions are deemed adopted, the bill is read the first time and ordered to be printed.)

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[English]

PETITIONS**HUMAN RIGHTS**

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present some petitions this morning on behalf of several people who live in and around the Edmonton area.

The petitioners state that a majority of Canadians believe that the privileges which society accords to heterosexual couples should not be extended to same sex relationships.

They pray and request that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships and also not include the term, which is as yet undefined, sexual orientation in the human rights code.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Madam Speaker, I am presenting two more petitions today bringing the total to six petitions that I have presented this week on the subject of gun control.