

Adjournment Debate

That is the kind of pride we have in the Government for which we have been working.

The Cabinet, I might say, delayed the implementation of the change to pension regulations until January of 1986. The subject, of course, has been referred to the Forget Commission. The Government will carefully examine all recommendations of the final report when it becomes available, including any recommendation dealing with the issue of changes to pension regulations.

HATE LITERATURE—POSTED IN MOSCOW FOR DELIVERY IN CANADA

Mr. Terry Clifford (London—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I have received many complaints from Ukrainian Canadians who are the recipients of unwanted literature they deem hateful since I brought this matter to the attention of the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. MacKay) over six months ago. It is ironic that this subject is being discussed today when representatives of the Ukrainian-Canadian Students Union are visiting Parliament.

● (1820)

The key to the problem is misinformation, particularly misinformation from the Soviets. Chernobyl is one great example of this misinformation. After the incident at Chernobyl, days went by before anyone would acknowledge that there was a problem. That went on until other countries informed the rest of us that there was a problem, something to which the Soviets finally admitted.

I think this subject takes any mystery out of the 1932-33 famine which was certainly a reality in Ukraine. This type of misinformation leads people to become hateful of the literature and materials which are sent unwanted to them. It seems to me that we must have rules and regulations to protect the human rights of Canadians. They are rights which must be cherished and looked after.

When one examines the system which is in place, one has to look at the customs officers, the frontline troops so to speak, who see the materials which come into our country. It is apparent that these people are key decision-makers in determining whether or not these materials should be reviewed by our justice system to see if in fact they do offend the rights of Canadians. It is up to these officials to decide whether or not to detain the materials or pass them through to Canada Post, which will distribute them to Canadians.

I have discussed this situation with officials at Canada Post. They tell me that they are very concerned about it. They have pointed out that they have no alternative but to deliver the mail. It is their mandate to deliver mail if it is appropriately addressed and if it carries sufficient postage. That is their job. They are certainly very sympathetic to anything which would violate the human rights of Canadians.

Thus the onus is on the Minister of National Revenue, through the Department of Customs and Excise, to get these

rules and regulations in order. I suggest that some new guidelines are in order. The frontline troops are in need of some operating procedures which they can use to examine the materials which flood into our country. They need guidelines to allow them to make decisions so that Canadians will not be bombarded with this unwanted material.

These guidelines will have to be based on jurisprudence which is available in Canada. However, I must say that in doing a review of it, I find that we are somewhat lacking in jurisprudence in the field of hate literature. I hope more cases will be examined by our judicial system in order that more decisions can be made. Therefore, more jurisprudence will be made available so that new guidelines can be put together. In this way our customs officials can have them at the ready at the border crossings to intercept this foreign literature. This is literature which in some cases is very much hate literature to the recipients here in Canada.

I am sure Ukrainian Canadians would like me to say that the matter about which we are speaking today goes beyond just Ukrainian Canadians. I hope the Minister will take this into account because hate literature has become a major problem in Canada. I hope he will implement some new guidelines and regulations so that Canadians will have maintained the human rights which we fought so hard to obtain.

Mr. Bernard Valcourt (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to respond to the Hon. Member's concern regarding hate propaganda directed to Ukrainian and other people in Canada. The subject he raises tonight flows from certain literature that was posted in Moscow for delivery in Canada. I can advise the Hon. Member that the Department of National Revenue shares his concern with the importance of prohibiting material which incites hatred toward any group which can be identified by race, creed or colour.

● (1825)

The Department of National Revenue is responsible for administering Tariff Item 99201-1 of Schedule "C" of the Customs Tariff which prohibits the importation into Canada of certain materials. Material suspected of being treasonable, seditious, obscene or hate propaganda is inspected thoroughly by customs officers and, if judged to come within the terms of Tariff Item 99201-1, is prohibited from entering Canada.

The material in question has been thoroughly reviewed by customs officials. Consideration was given to the dominant feature or over-all tone of the material. The material does not constitute hate propaganda within the meaning of Section 281.3(8) of the Criminal Code in that the material does not reveal hatred against Ukrainians or any specific ethnic group in Canada or any other country.

The issue in question is a publication of a Soviet society known as the Rodina (Homeland) Society, responsible for cultural relations with compatriots residing abroad.