

Adjournment Debate

motivated the Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific in subsequent years and before then are alive and well today.

With respect to the situation in China it was on June 4 of this year that Premier Li Peng, on the 5th anniversary of the killings in Tiananmen Square, chose to implement harsh new regulations clamping down even further with respect to human rights.

There has been a crackdown on labour dissidents. The situation in Tibet is very serious. We know for example that China has recently banned the display of pictures of the Dalai Lama, continued its nuclear testing, continued its arms sales to repressive regimes and, most seriously, continued its inhumane policy of population transfer. There continues to be brutal repression of Buddhist nuns and monks in Tibet.

• (2000)

With respect to the issue in East Timor, the human rights abuses there are also very serious. I would urge the government to call for an end to government funding for promotion of trade with Indonesia, to support the international arms embargo, to call for the release of Xanana Gusmao and all East Timorese political prisoners, to support self-determination for East Timor as the Prime Minister did in his letter of December 1991.

In closing I hope as well that the government will reiterate our concern to the Chinese government about the importance of democracy, freedom of expression and the rule of law for Hong Kong as well, as the transition on July 1, 1997 is coming up in the very near future.

There will be a large banquet in Beijing in the near future. I hope that our government will recognize that in addition to promoting trade we must speak out forcefully for human rights and democracy. We must call for the immediate release of Wei Jingsheng. Certainly we must do everything we can to promote those values of human rights and democracy that are so important and so profound both in Canada and in Asia.

Hon. Raymond Chan (Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the respect for human rights in China remains an important objective of our bilateral and multilateral agenda. Bilaterally we capitalize on every opportunity to remind the Chinese government at high levels of our concerns. We are pursuing the development of a serious dialogue about these concerns through diplomatic channels.

We will continue to pursue human rights issues in multilateral organizations, including a dialogue on these concerns with Chinese representatives. At the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, which took place from January to March of this year, Canada co-sponsored a draft resolution on human rights in China.

The resolution expressed concern over continuing reports of violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including torture, severe restrictions on the rights of freedom of expression, religion, assembly, association and to a fair trial. It called on China to take further measures to ensure the full observance of all human rights, including the rights of women.

Also, we have to recognize that there are fundamental elements that need to be strengthened in China for it to develop into an open, modern state that respects human rights. Therefore at a time when China is going through an extensive liberalization period, we support innovative means to bring about change to the Chinese system.

We will accomplish this goal by supporting activities in areas where we believe China is susceptible to influence. We will be undertaking a number of new co-operative projects to assist the People's Republic of China in its efforts to reform its legal and judicial structure, and in its efforts to build up its human resource development sector.

Trade, economic development and human rights are mutually reinforcing. A China open to the world can only be good for its people, both economically and politically, and will further the cause of respect for human rights.

[Translation]

CUSTOMS BROKERS

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I recently asked the revenue minister in this House two questions concerning the new regulations on the collection of import duties and taxes that will come into effect on January 16, 1995.

In a document signed by the Deputy Minister of Revenue Canada, Customs, Excise and Taxation, after a long preamble trying to justify the measure and make importers feel safer, the department unilaterally decides to increase the bond required of importers to 100 per cent of their monthly instalments, up to a maximum of \$10 million. The reason behind this change is the losses sustained by the government because customs brokers or importers were no longer able to pay their instalments.

• (2005)

For now, but for a short time only, the requirement is 35 per cent of the first \$200,000 and 17.5 per cent of the next \$1.8 million, up to a maximum bond of \$2 million.

This bond can take the form of cash, Treasury bills, a letter of endorsement from a bank or a bond issued by the government.

Under the Customs Act, the importer is ultimately responsible for paying the duties and taxes. In Canada, these duties and taxes amount to about \$11.5 billion a year, most of which is collected by customs brokers at no cost to the government.

A manufacturer who wants to import a given quantity of materials or products can import them himself. Use of a customs broker is optional, not required.