

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, February 3, 1984

The House met at 11 a.m.

● (1105)

[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

ANNIVERSARY OF 1916 FIRE—SIGNIFICANCE OF MACE

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members will notice at once today that the mace in use is not the one ordinarily resting upon the table. The reason is that we are resuming a tradition which goes back to the time of the fire in this House 68 years ago today. The mace now on the table was crafted after the fire of 1916 so that Parliament could continue to sit, the mace as well as the Chamber having been destroyed in the fire 68 years ago today. This mace was crafted so that the Parliament of Canada could sit elsewhere while this Chamber was being restored. That took some four years.

During the tenure of Mr. Speaker Mitchener in particular, the mace was used on the anniversary of that fire. We have continued to observe that practice as a memory of what took place on that occasion in 1916.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 21

[English]

HUMAN RIGHTS

VIOLATIONS IN BALTIC STATES AND POLAND

Mr. Joe Reid (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, this country's respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals is the highest in the world. The recent return of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) from behind the Iron Curtain gives us cause to reflect once more upon recognition and respect for human rights within those countries.

Continuously since 1944 Moscow has been realizing the systematic destruction of the Baltic States. It goes beyond just political repression. There is the unremitting, harsh censorship of literature and the arts. There is the gradual elimination of language and tradition. There is, in fact, a forced assimilation.

The Solidarity movement in Poland is a fine example to the world of a people's peaceful resistance to a political regime. It was stamped out by martial law. Four members of the Workers' Defence Committee, commonly known as KOR, and an advisory group to Solidarity, were arrested in September,

1982. KOR was founded as a way of protest against a steep rise in prices of food and consumer goods. KOR never engaged in clandestine activities, military or anti-military activities, yet these four are charged with an attempt to overthrow the Polish Peoples Republic and with weakening the defence capability of that state.

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POLITICAL PARTIES

REPORTED BAN ON PUBLICATION OF BOOK CRITICIZING NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY POLICIES

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, today I rise more in sadness and sorrow than in anger.

Mr. Waddell: Why? Is John Turner not going to run again?

Mr. Peterson: The NDP will get theirs if they will just listen. I refer to an article entitled "NDP Blocking Book Plans", an article which outlines how the report "Taking Stock, A Report to the NDP Federal Caucus on NDP Economic Policy", by the renowned scholar and NDP thinker, James Laxer, has been barred from publication by the NDP.

I recall a short two years ago when we stood shoulder to shoulder with the NDP in terms of asserting the fundamental need for Canadians to have rights, the rights of freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, freedom of the press. But I can perhaps understand why the NDP does not want to see this report published. For example, Laxer says that the Party's policies are seriously inadequate, contradictory, shortsighted, ideological, and ambivalent.

I quote:

The NDP's analysis of economic and social evolution remains locked in the 1950s and 1960s where it had its origins, wrote Laxer.

It is a sad day when Canadians cannot see the full extent of this publication. Now I can understand perhaps why the Tories—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Hon. Member's time has expired.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS

INCREASE IN MONTHLY UNEMPLOYMENT LEVELS

Mr. John McDermid (Brampton-Georgetown): Mr. Speaker, it's that time of the month again when those unemployed people in Canada become numbers on a sheet of paper, seasonally adjusted and categorized, and it is not a pretty