

Adjournment Debate

• (1830)

Numerous statistics demonstrate clearly to us that the merit principle has not been applied in hiring and in employment in this country and, shamefully, in our own public service. The statistics make it very clear that women have been at a disadvantage and have been kept at low levels of employment. People with disabilities are totally under-represented in our workforce, notwithstanding their qualifications. Aboriginal people are shamefully under-represented in our workforce. People who are visible minorities are also shamefully under-represented and in fact have far less chances of getting hired, one-quarter of a chance just a couple of years ago, compared to a white applicant.

These are not necessarily conscious discriminations. They are built into our system and our value judgments. I say to the white males of this country: "You have nothing to lose but your privileges". This Canada of ours is not about privileges. It is not about preferential treatment for a minority of the population which has existed for a long time. It is about using the full, rich—

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry, the time provided for Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1) the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

TURKEY

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last month I had the honour of leading a delegation to Turkey to look into the very serious situation of human rights violations in that country. In particular, I was looking at the appalling human rights violations affecting the Kurdish community in Turkey.

Some 12 million Kurds live in Turkey. They have been denied any democratic rights whatsoever to express their fundamental cultural and linguistic heritage.

Following my return from that delegation, I raised a question in the House last week. I asked the Prime Minister to explain why the Canadian government is seriously contemplating sending a delegation led by a minister of the government to celebrate 75 years of Turkish parliamentary democracy.

It is absolutely appalling that the government would seriously consider sending a delegation of that nature when six members of the Turkish Parliament are locked up in the Ankara prison solely for have spoken out for human rights, democracy and justice.

When I had the privilege of meeting with these members of Parliament, including a Kurdish woman, Leyla Zana, who has been sentenced to a term of 15 years, they were astonished and deeply concerned that our government would seriously contemplate sending that delegation.

Second, I raised the issue of the possible sale of 39 CF-5 fighter aircraft to Turkey. We know of the human rights abuses. We know of the burning and destruction of villages. We know of over two million Kurds who have been made homeless in southeastern Turkey. We know of the attacks on journalists. We know of the very profound attacks on many other minorities in Turkey.

This arms deal is fundamentally immoral. I call on the Government of Canada to join with Norway and Germany, two of our strong NATO allies, in imposing an arms embargo on Turkey. Far from selling fighter aircraft, we should be imposing an arms embargo. Look at Turkey's record in Cyprus for example: the illegal invasion, as well as its current appalling human rights record.

Canada's policy is supposedly not to sell weapons to areas of conflict and not to sell weapons to countries with questionable human rights records. The government says: "No problem, we will get a promise from Turkey that they will not use this against civilians". The Turkish government made a similar promise with respect to tanks sold to them by Germany. That promise was broken as well.

• (1835)

I call on the government to say now, categorically, that it will not participate in this charade of the celebration of Turkish democracy, that it will cancel the Canadian delegation, that it will not sell CF-5 fighter aircraft, that it will impose an arms embargo and call on the Turkish government to arrive at a peaceful solution through political dialogue and peaceful means instead of attacking the Kurdish community.

Finally, the PKK has called on the government to recognize that the time has come for dialogue, not for separation but as General Secretary Ocalan said: "The time has come to live side by side on free and equal terms". The way to achieve this is to be open and honest.

I hope the parliamentary secretary will take the opportunity to set the record straight on this issue.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to set the record straight. The hon. member has raised three important issues. One is the Canadian delegation participating in the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Turkish Parliament on April 23. The other is the human rights violations against the Kurds in northern Iraq and against some parliamentarians, that he explained in detail. The third issue is the sale of the CF-5 aircraft to Turkey.