

THE SENATE

Thursday, January 22, 1981

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers.

THE CONSTITUTION

SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE—CHANGE IN COMMONS MEMBERSHIP

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons to acquaint the Senate with a change in the list of members appointed to serve on the Special Joint Committee on the Constitution of Canada.

(*For text of message, see today's Minutes of the Proceedings of the Senate.*)

UKRAINE

SIXTY-THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROCLAMATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Hon. Paul Yuzyk: Honourable senators, with leave, I should like to draw the attention of the Senate to the fact that January 22 is a very special day for three-quarters of a million Canadian citizens of Ukrainian origin. It was 63 years ago, on January 22, 1918, that the Central Rada, the Parliament of the Ukrainian people, proclaimed the independence of Ukraine in Kiev, the ancient capital of the country.

The downfall of the oppressive Russian tsarist regime in 1917 heralded the liberation and freedom of many non-Russian peoples, such as the Poles, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Byelorussians, and many others, all of whom in the past had been conquered and incorporated into the Russian empire.

Ukraine, under a democratic government of the Cossacks, was conquered by Tsar Peter I in 1709, who imposed an autocratic form of government on the Ukrainian people which, in the 19th century, forbade, by decree, the use of the name "Ukraine" and the Ukrainian language.

The collapse of Russian tsardom, the "prison of nations", gave the opportunity for the Ukrainians and the subjugated nations to assert their will.

The Parliamentary Act of January 22, 1918, established the Ukrainian National Republic, modelled upon those of the western world. It recognized the highest principles of democracy—freedom of speech, press, religion, assembly, association, and personal freedom. All minorities, including the Jews, were granted—and I quote—"national-personal" autonomy and representation in the government. The Ukrainian National Republic was the very antithesis of totalitarianism, despotism,

colonialism and imperialism, and therefore has much in common with Canada.

The fact that today the blue-yellow flag of free Ukraine is flying over the City Hall of Ottawa, the capital of Canada, which is recognition of their just struggle for freedom and democracy, brings great joy to the Ukrainians of this country and to all freedom-loving Ukrainians throughout the world.

The National Liberation Revolution, which first began in Ukraine, spread throughout the Russian Empire to the nations imprisoned by the Russian tsarist regime. One after the other, the non-Russian peoples proclaimed their independent states. This was a democratic, anti-imperio-colonial manifestation. Gradually, however, the Russian communist regime subverted and conquered, by force, all of these independent states and compelled them to join the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics by 1922.

The former Russian tsarist empire was thus transformed, by conquest, into a totalitarian Russian communist empire more despotic and reactionary than the previous one.

Ukrainians have been in the forefront of the human rights movement in the Soviet Union. Some, like the Orthodox priest Vasyl Romaniuk, have been jailed for their religious beliefs. Others, like Yuriy Shukhewych, a totally innocent person, have received long prison terms for being the children of Ukrainian patriots who had fought for the liberation of their country. Severe sentences have been meted out, particularly to 37 members of the Ukrainian Helsinki group in Kiev, now represented by General Petro Grigorenko, and other expelled members, in the United States.

Citing the Soviet constitution to the effect that each republic has the right to secede, and Principle VIII of the Helsinki Act on the self-determination of peoples, the group's memorandum of autumn, 1979, stated:

The group has become a force in the national liberation struggle of the Ukrainian people for its national and political liberation and for the right of the individual to a free life in his own land.

Free Ukrainians, and the free people of all subjugated nations of the Soviet Russian empire and its satellites, will continue to celebrate their independence days, and impress upon the western world the fact that freedom is indivisible. The principles of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act must be applied to the Soviet Union, which is a signatory, to the effect that self-determination, complete freedom, sovereignty and integrity of national territory must also be granted to the non-Russian and satellite nations.

Honourable senators, the Canadian government, Parliament, legislators, leaders and people in general must constant-