



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Romania: Orphans

SPEECH

Monday, 29 March 1999

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Monday, 29 March 1999	Source House
Page 4557	Proof No
Questioner	Responder
Speaker Murphy, John, MP	Question No.

Mr MURPHY (Lowe)—I rise on the matter of the ongoing economic circumstances in Romania and the plight of orphan children there. There is an increase in awareness in our constituencies in Australia of the enormous numbers of abandoned children in Romania. These children are housed wherever there is room and, because the files of these children have marked on them that they have a mental disability, adoption is impossible. The facts are that many of the children do not have a mental disability. Many abandoned children in Romania are housed in former prisons converted into mental hospitals. They live in dreadful conditions.

I note that currently the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has an honorary consul in Bucharest. This post lacks full capacity for the immigration and consular duties which were administered through Australia's embassy in Belgrade. That embassy is now closed due to the recent hostilities in Yugoslavia. I urge the Minister for Foreign Affairs to review the status of the honorary consul in Bucharest and raise it to the status of full consul, with full immigration and consular duties, in order to further the adoption and immigration processes for orphaned children.