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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, April 23, 1996

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, April 23, 1996

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table in both official languages the government's responses to nine petitions presented during the first session.

* * *

WAYS AND MEANS

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a notice of ways and means motion and I ask that an order of the day be designated for consideration of the motion. I believe the document has been tabled.

* * *

SALES TAX

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are putting forward today a set of measures that marks significant progress toward the replacement of the GST. We are announcing the signing of a memoranda of understanding between the federal government and the governments of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador. This is the first step toward an integrated federal-provincial sales tax.

[*Translation*]

The province of Quebec is concluding the harmonization process this year. We are committed to working with the remaining provinces to the same end and are confident that, over time, Canada will indeed develop a single sales tax system. In addition, we are tabling a notice of ways and means motion proposing over 100 measures to streamline and simplify the operation of Canada's sales tax system. These measures are an essential part of the new architecture of a much improved sales tax system.

[*English*]

Taken together, we believe the component of this package constitutes a major advance in responsible sales tax reform. We believe that consumers, taxpayers and business, particularly small business, will benefit. True, this is not perfection, but perfection is not possible in the real world where tax policy has to apply. It is, however, real improvement.

● (1005)

Let me address at the outset the question not of responsible tax policy but a broader question, that of responsible government. In the red book we wrote: ''A Liberal government will replace the GST with a system that generates equivalent revenues, is fairer to consumers and to small business, minimizes disruptions to small business and promotes federal-provincial fiscal co-operation and harmonization''. We believe that today's plan begins that process.

We know that many Canadians believed we would be able to do more than we are announcing today. Indeed, we had hoped we would be able to do more. However, there is something Canadians deserve above all else and that is government that is responsible in its management of the economy and honest in what it does. Let me be direct with the House and with Canadians.

During the election campaign we were right to criticize the GST. It created overlap and duplication among governments. It was costing small business time, energy and money; the price paid for having to keep two sets of books, to track two sets of transactions and to deal with two tax collectors. We were right to say that all that was wrong. It still is. However, we were mistaken to have believed that once it was anchored in place a completely different alternative would be within reach, responsibly. It has not been.

The honest truth is that for two and a half years we looked at virtually every conceivable alternative. Some were not possible or desirable because of their economic impact, others because of the nature of our federation. What we have arrived at is not the best alternative conceivable; it is the best alternative possible and it is in keeping with our red book commitment.

We could have dressed up our announcement today. We could have pretended it is more than it is. Today's announcement begins the process of replacing the GST, it does not complete it. We could have cynically claimed this announcement was the panacea, that as of today the GST was dead, buried and scrapped. We know not being able to say this today means many Canadians will be disappointed. We understand that disappointment. We share it. We

want Canadians to understand fully the efforts we have made going back more than two years in order to avoid that disappointment.

[*Translation*]

The finance committee of the House looked at this issue, beginning immediately after the election. It heard nearly 500 witnesses and received more than 700 briefs—from consumers, from experts, from business. The committee looked at 20 alternatives and it found all of them wanting.

It concluded, as have we, that the best route to replace the GST was a simplified, integrated federal-provincial value-added tax. Concurrent with the work of that committee and thereafter, the government has worked without rest on this file.

[*English*]

As a government we evaluated every proposal brought to our attention, every option open to us. We considered other types of taxes. We looked at different combinations of taxes. We looked at options apart from taxation. We looked at everything. Some options might have made cynical, short term political sense, but none made good policy sense.

Let me explain by beginning with some basics. An inescapable fact is the GST brings in almost $18 billion a year, 13 per cent of the federal government's revenue. In the red book we made it very clear we could not give up $18 billion in revenue, nor could we cut spending by that amount to compensate for the loss that would be entailed, for the purpose of spending cuts must first be to bring the deficit down.

Therefore from the beginning our focus was on finding alternatives to the GST, either alternative sources of revenue or building on taxes that already existed. We looked at 20 options. Among them were a payroll tax, a wealth transfer tax, a national retail sales tax and a wholesale tax. None of them worked.

• (1010)

[*Translation*]

Let us look at three examples: we considered the business transfer tax or BTT. The BTT has been proposed before but is has never been tried anywhere in the world. The uncertainty for business and the cost of implementing a totally new system is not a risk that can be taken lightly.

We looked at a personal expenditure tax, where tax is paid on the difference between an individual's total income and his or her total savings for the year. However, there are serious disadvantages with this option. It would be very intrusive. It would be much more complex for taxpayers—in terms of record-keeping and compliance.

[*English*]

We looked at what is called a turnover or a transaction tax, in which tax is charged at each and every stage in the production and distribution process through a lower levy on a firm's sales. Unlike the GST, their are no rebates. The problem is the same as with a retail sales tax. Large manufacturing companies can get around the tax by making products in house, and small companies cannot.

In the export sector Canadian business would be dealt a blow. Why? At each stage of the production and the distribution process Canadian components would be taxed and the tax would be embedded in the price of our exports. Who would benefit from that? Foreign competitors, not Canadian producers.

These are but a few of the alternatives we looked at and concluded that none was satisfactory. Either they came nowhere near raising the revenue we need or they failed to meet one or more of the tests of responsible taxation of fairness, simplicity and economic efficiency.

Finally, we looked at making up the revenue that would be lost by replacing the GST through increasing other taxes that already exist. We looked at an across the board approach. We looked at more targeted approaches. We looked at increasing corporate income taxes and excise taxes. It was clear that no matter what we did under any conceivable scenario, unduly large increases in personal income taxes would be required, and that was simply unacceptable.

That briefly summarizes what was a very lengthy search for a system and a solution completely different from the GST. The results of our search were not what we had hoped but they did make very clear the direction we should take.

While we concluded there was no alternative today to a value added tax, we also concluded there is an alternative to the GST such as it now is, and that is a much better value added tax that is harmonized.

Governments need the revenue the current tax system brings in, but Canadians do not need the headaches the current tax system causes. The goal we have arrived at is a simplified integrated federal-provincial value added tax. The process we have embarked on is to put the framework in place now so that provinces can join in when their own individual priorities make that possible; that is, when they are ready.

With today's announcement we are now on the way to having a single federal-provincial sales tax in four provinces. Other prov-

inces are waiting to see how the new system works before they join in. In the end we are confident Canada will eventually have a single sales tax system.

We will continue to work with individual provinces as their circumstances permit. In the meantime unanimity need not and should not stand in the way. Let me describe the improvements we believe will flow from the approach being put forward today.

First, an integrated federal-provincial value added tax reduces the burden on business, particularly on small business, created by the current system. It means there would be no longer separate federal or provincial sales taxes of different types operating on different bases with all the complexity and the inefficiency that entails.

● (1015)

Canada is the only developed economy in the world that tolerates two completely different sales taxes operating at the same cash register. No one else puts up with it and it is very clear why. Patchwork sales tax systems are second rate systems particularly in an economy that is increasingly integrated globally and domestically.

Under an integrated approach this will change. There will be one sales tax, not two. There will be one tax base, not two. There will be one tax rate in a province, not two. There will be one sales tax administration, not two. What does this mean? It means life will be simpler.

Take for example the case of a store that sells washing machines. Today the retailer has the burden of dealing with two entirely different sales tax systems. The store must first total up any sales that are made to exempt purchases. It has to keep a separate record system to prove that such sales are legitimately exempt from provincial sales tax.

Then at the end of each month that store must calculate the amount of provincial sales tax collected and remit it to the provincial government. At the end of each quarter along with the provincial sales tax calculation the retailer must also calculate the amount of federal sales tax collected, deduct the amount of tax paid on all of those purchases and remit the difference to the federal government. Not only that, but throughout the year the retailer must deal with two separate bureaucracies if he or she has any sales tax questions and faces the possibility at any time of having to deal with two separate sales tax auditors.

No wonder that small businesses in particular are demanding that governments do something to address their sales tax compliance burden. The fact is we are now doing something. All this will change under the new system. It will be better for consumers. It will mean a reduced paper burden for small business, less time and money tied up unproductively, one tax form, one process, one system.

[*Translation*]

The Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants has estimated that a harmonized national sales tax system could save Canadian businesses as much as $700 million per year. And because there will only be one tax collector, that same analysis suggests that the provinces could save an additional $100 million annually on their administration once such a system is fully in place.

Canadians want an end to overlap and duplication between governments. On sales tax, this integrated system would end it once and for all.

[*English*]

Furthermore a harmonized value added tax will be economically more efficient. Not only will businesses save money and time but their products should become more competitive.

At present businesses throughout Canada pay provincial sales tax on a broad range of things they themselves buy to make products or to keep their businesses running. This increases their costs and in turn leads to higher prices for their goods. As a result Canadian goods competing with imports at home or exports abroad have provincial sales tax embedded in their price. In fact because the tax becomes embedded in the production and distribution chain, the prices of our goods are often inflated not by one but by many layers of provincial retail sales tax.

Under this proposal that competitive disadvantage would end. For instance exports are the engine of our economy. As a result of this reform Canadian business will be even more successful in markets abroad. This in turn means jobs for Canadians at home. Consumers should also see benefits under the new system.

Let me address directly the contention that a harmonized value added tax shifts the tax burden from business to consumers. Let me also address the contention that consumers will lose because a broader range of goods and particular services is taxed under this approach. These arguments are simply wrong.

The fact is that today as mentioned businesses are taxed by the provinces on all the items they must buy in order to make their products, deliver their services and keep their businesses going. Anyone who believes that business does not pass on these provincial sales taxes to the consumer is simply naive. If business pays a tax up front, it is consumers who pay for it in the end. The tax is embedded in the price. This is true for all products and services produced in Canada, whether or not they are taxed at the final point of sale.

● (1020)

For example, some may believe that they do not pay tax on a haircut when there is none directly charged to them by the barber or the hairdresser. That is not the case. The price does include tax: the

tax the barber or the hairdresser pays on their supplies from their scissors to their salon equipment to the shampoo. When they decide what price to charge, they pass these costs on to their clients.

Under an integrated value added tax system, this changes completely. Provincial retail sales taxes will no longer be paid by businesses during the production and distribution process. Therefore, for goods and services not previously taxed, prices will go up by less than the full extent of the provincial tax because the embedded taxes will be removed. For those products and services that are presently taxed, their prices should fall. This would be the case even if the overall tax rate did not come down. Why? Again, it is because the embedded tax will disappear, lowering prices.

Furthermore, there is another advantage to broadening the base. When we do not tax services, we distort the economy. We are imposing a burden on some businesses but not on others. A broader tax base spreads the burden fairly to all sectors and to all consumers. For instance, of significance in the light of today's announcement, for the harmonizing provinces in Atlantic Canada the broader base is one of the factors that allows for a sharp decline in the overall sales tax rate.

Finally, one of the most frustrating aspects of the GST is the fact that without carrying around a calculator, consumers often do not know what things are going to cost until they get to the checkout counter. Every time a Canadian buys a candy bar or a pair of socks, GST is not on the sticker or the tag but is added as a rude awakening at the cash register.

Therefore, the agreements that will be arrived at pursuant to the memorandums of understanding we are announcing today will put an end to that practice. In the three Atlantic provinces that are harmonizing, beginning April 1, 1997 the price will include the tax. The price people see will be the price people pay. However, the new tax will also be transparent. Vendors will be able to show the tax on their bills and we will be consulting with businesses on how best to do this.

[*Translation*]

Today's announcement entails major structural change. It represents an important overhaul of the sales tax system. This government has consistently acted on the principle that people and governments need to be able to plan and adjust to structural change, and where required, we have been prepared to provide help to those who face adjustment costs up front.

For example, payments were made to provinces to address revenue losses they incurred under the major tax reform in 1972. And adjustment assistance was provided in each and every one of our budgets. For example, last year we provided resources to facilitate the adjustment flowing from elimination of subsidies under the Western Grain Transportation Act to the western provinces, as we did with the Atlantic freight subsidies to Quebec and the Atlantic provinces.

[*English*]

Today we are following the same precedents. An adjustment framework will be put in place to share the costs with those provinces which would experience revenue losses from harmonization in excess of 5 per cent of their current sales tax revenue.

In addition to the three provinces previously mentioned, this would include Prince Edward Island, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. On the other hand, the revenues of British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario would not be reduced sufficiently to trigger compensation under the formula, nor Quebec's for the same reason, either today or in 1990, the time it signed the MOU on harmonization with the federal government.

● (1025)

Under the set formula the federal government will provide 100 per cent of the balance of revenue losses in years one and two, 50 per cent in year three and 25 per cent in year four. The formula has been applied consistently to each province that has decided to harmonize and it will remain open to the other provinces for the foreseeable future.

Given the benefits that will flow from harmonization, we believe the total cost to the federal government, about $960 million for the three participating provinces spread over four years, is a responsible and reasonable investment. The federal and provincial governments will be sharing about equally in the adjustment costs over this period. The assistance will end after year four by which time the provinces will have had adequate time to adjust. I must emphasize this adjustment assistance will not jeopardize our deficit targets. They are secure.

The measures being announced today include a package of over 100 changes designed to streamline and simplify the operation of Canada's value added tax system. These improvements result from extensive consultations over the past two years with businesses, particularly small businesses, consumer associations and other groups.

[*Translation*]

Some of these are technical and sector-specific. Many will have a positive impact on those they affect.

For example, as part of our commitment to assist charities and non-profit organizations, new rules will be put in place. As a result, about 10,000 charities will no longer be required to register for and administer the GST.

The provision that remove the tax from medical devices used by persons with disabilities will be broadened, and clarified. More equipment and supplies for Canada's farmers will be made tax-free. The rules for employee benefits are being simplified—an area

of the sales tax that has been the focus of small business anger from day one.

In addition, we will be streamlining accounting, interest, penalty, administration and enforcement provisions across all federal tax laws, something that will go a long way to simplify the system for small business.

[*English*]

These are significant changes that will be of immediate importance to those concerned. However, there is one thing that is not being changed. The credit provided to low income Canadians and the rebates provided to municipalities, universities, schools, hospitals, qualifying charities and non-profit organizations remain intact.

The provinces joining us today clearly recognize the gains that flow from this reform. The fact is that in a region where the need to secure economic growth is as acute as anywhere, tax rationalization and simplification is probably one of the most beneficial job creation initiatives that could be undertaken.

The benefit of acting in concert so that reform in each province is reinforced by parallel change in the other maximizes the improvement for Atlantic enterprise and consumers. The benefit of a more efficient Atlantic economy means companies and workers will be able to compete more successfully in world markets.

The benefits of less overlap and duplication mean reduced administrative costs for governments and small business. For example, small business with less than $30,000 of taxable sales will no longer have to register for either federal or provincial sales tax.

There are benefits that will result from a lower sales tax rate. When this reform is fully implemented, the official tax rate will be 3 per cent lower in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and 4 per cent lower in Newfoundland and Labrador.

• (1030)

Indeed, the real tax reduction will be even greater because the new system will eliminate tax on tax. The effective rate reduction will then, in fact, be almost 4 per cent in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and almost 5 per cent in Newfoundland and Labrador.

[*Translation*]

The announcements today are not the end of the process. They are a stage. As part of moving towards an integrated federal-provincial value-added tax, discussions with the three provinces will now take place to turn the memoranda of understanding announced today into final detailed agreements to take effect on April 1 of next year.

At the same time, with Quebec's harmonization process proceeding, we are very much open to continued discussions with the remaining governements to move foward towards integration on the basis that has now been established.

[*English*]

In summary, while the strategy we are proposing is not the best solution in an ideal world, we believe it is the best solution in the real world. The alternative would have been to have embraced some option that would have been superficially attractive, but in the end would have been more complex for Canadians, would have reduced the capacity of government to provide needed services and would have thrown the clean-up of the nation's finances severely off track. This we were not prepared to do.

We are not pretending that our proposals are more than they are. They will have to stand on their own merits. We are not making changes for change's sake. We are making changes that make sense. That is what we were elected to do. We were elected to govern, to make responsible choices and that is what we are doing today.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I must first of all deplore the way the Minister of Finance tabled documents this morning, an hour and a half before his presentation in the House, without our hearing from him in the past three days about his intentions regarding the GST. If this is not a way to circumvent democratic principles, I wonder what it is, especially when such an important issue is at stake.

What strikes me about the finance minister's speech is that we could have taken his old speeches from 1990, for example—the old speeches made by members of the Liberal Party of Canada—and turned them completely around to arrive at this morning's speech. A few years ago, the Minister of Finance was saying the exact opposite of what he said in his speech this morning.

All those who expected the GST to disappear, to be scrapped—as many in Canada and Quebec did and as many Liberal members had been promising for three or four years—will be sorely disappointed. The GST is staying; it is not being scrapped but replaced by another kind of GST. This is in total contradiction with the many oral and written promises made by members of the Liberal Party of Canada.

Allow me to quote just a few of them. On March 11, 1996—not so long ago—the *Globe and Mail* reprinted this quote by the Deputy Prime Minister:

• (1035)

[*English*]

''I have already said personally and very directly that if the GST is not abolished I will resign''.

[*Translation*]

That is what the Deputy Prime Minister herself said on October 18, 1993.

My second quote, which dates back to the 1993 election campaign, comes from the Prime Minister:

[*English*]

''We will scrap the GST''.

[*Translation*]

To scrap means to eliminate; therefore the GST was to be eliminated, not replaced by another kind of GST to give the appearance of keeping an election promise.

I could give you any number of quotes but I will make do with a last one. On May 2, 1994—not so long ago—the Prime Minister said this: ''We hate this tax and we will make it disappear''. The GST is staying; the only disappearance is in the price of the product.

The finance minister's new measure is hiding two important things. First of all, some of the figures in the finance minister's speech this morning are hidden; one figure is real, however: the cost of harmonization with the maritime provinces. It is the cost of buying an election promise that was not kept.

The Minister of Finance has paid off the maritimes so that they would help him keep an election promise through shameless window dressing, as we saw this morning. A total cost of $1 billion has not been denied so far. One billion dollars is what Quebecers and Canadians from the other provinces will have to pay for an election promise that was not kept by the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister. One billion dollars is what this measure is really costing us.

But there is more. It will cost more than the $1 billion they said it will cost us in the next four years. I do not know if the Minister of Finance and his Liberal colleagues have realized this—there are many things they fail to realize—but reducing consumption taxes from 19 to 15 per cent will force all Quebecers and all Canadians from the other provinces to pay more in equalization to the maritime provinces in the future. Did he realize this? No, or if he did, he is hiding this additional cost from the people.

Are these increased equalization costs, which all taxpayers in Quebec and Canada must pay in addition to the $1 billion the Minister of Finance promised the governments of the maritime provinces in the short term, acceptable? Are they acceptable, when we compare this harmonization process, this buy-off of the maritime provinces, to Quebec's treatment in recent years?

Everyone here knows that Quebec's sales tax has been harmonized with the federal sales tax. Quebec is administering this federal tax. Quebec has been a good boy, a good corporate citizen in not demanding any compensation for this harmonization.

Why is Quebec's effort in that area not recognized now? Why is the federal government now dipping in the pockets of Quebecers and Canadians to give $1 billion in compensation to the governments of the maritime provinces, but not to the Quebec government? We were good boys and good girls in harmonizing our tax with the federal sales tax and not asking for any compensation so far. Is that what they call managing the Canadian federation? There is something wrong here.

The new GST is a sneaky tax. It is sneaky because it is hidden in the price of goods and services. I listened to the Minister of Finance who said earlier that, in 1994 and even in 1995 and after, representations had been made to the finance committee by many people who told committee members that they were irritated and upset as consumers to see the GST added to their purchases.

Others warned them against changing four quarters for a buck and hiding taxes.

Let me read what the Liberal majority wrote in 1994 in its report. They said: ''It would just not be appropriate to hide from Canadians how much they pay in taxes to their government, and creating a hidden tax would affect their ability to force the government to account for how these taxes are collected and, to a lesser extent, for the use made of public funds''.

• (1040)

That is the kind of representations that were made to the finance committee. Most witnesses told us: ''First, abolish the GST, and if it absolutely has to be replaced by something else, make sure it not hidden from the public. Let it also be obvious that the federal government is unable to manage public finance properly, which explains why it has to keep dipping deeper and deeper in the pockets of taxpayers in Quebec and Canada''. That is what people were telling us. ''Show us the true face of public finance''.

Instead, the Minister of Finance is proposing a hidden tax. Worse yet, in 1989, in its minority report on the GST, the Liberal minority, which was the official opposition then, wrote that, if the GST were hidden in the sales price, it would make it that much easier for the government to raise it later.

This is what the Liberals held as true in 1989, but now that they are in power, the tax is not supposed to go up? We will have a hidden tax and it will not go up, contrary to what the Liberals held as true in 1989. It is a disgrace to change one's mind so radically and suddenly, at the expense of Canadians.

Even back when they were in better frame of mind and did not have an election promise made by he Prime Minister to keep, Liberals were not the only ones to say that the GST should not be hidden. In 1994, a survey conducted among its members by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce showed that 70 per cent of Canadian businesses were opposed to a hidden tax. That is 70 per cent. If that is not a majority, I wonder what is.

Recently, in February 1996, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce conducted the same survey again, just to realize not only that its members' opposition was holding strong, but also that the percentage of those opposed to hiding the tax in the sales price had

risen from 70 per cent to 76 per cent. Could the message be any clearer? I do not think so. This is hypocrisy on the part of a government that is not able to call things by their rightful name and to show the Canadian reality as it is.

There is a lot of hope in that document. It refers to an agreement reached between the federal government and the three maritime provinces, which account for roughly 15 per cent of the Canadian population, and points out that the idea is to apply these precepts to all provinces. I have some news for the Minister of Finance. A vast majority of Canadians are opposed to the minister's project to establish a single 15 per cent tax to be managed by the Canada revenue commission, which would bump the provinces. This would mean that, in Ontario for example, the tax burden would increase, while in Alberta the commodity tax would go up from 7 per cent to 15 per cent. Canadians unanimously believe that the Minister of Finance is mistaken if he thinks that other provinces will go along with his project.

This unanimity exists particularly in Quebec where, for several years now, Quebecers have been working hard to harmonize the two tax bases and to manage them. Indeed, Quebec looks after the collection and the administration of the GST on behalf of the federal government. So, we worked very hard to achieve harmonization at no additional costs.

The minister was too quick to dismiss the case of Quebec by saying, in his document *Towards Replacing the Goods and Services Tax*, that: ''Since the harmonization process with the province of Quebec will be completed this year, the government will now work with the other provinces to extend the system to the whole country''. The minister was too quick to dismiss the case of Quebec, because it is one thing to harmonize tax bases, as Quebec is doing, with the project being about 95 per cent completed, but it is quite another to endorse the minister's project to impose a single 15 per cent tax, while the GST and the TVQ together amount to 14 per cent. This project would result in a one per cent tax increase and would push Quebec aside by giving the Canada revenue commission the mandate to administer the new 15 per cent GST. Indeed, there is a difference between the current harmonization process and the finance minister's project.

• (1045)

Given Quebec's history of struggles to achieve autonomy in the field of taxation, particularly since the sixties with Jean Lesage, I can assure you that it will never agree to such a taxation system.

Far from promoting tax harmonization, this project could well undermine efforts made in Quebec over a period of several years to achieve that result. Let us not forget that this harmonization project was implemented with the agreement of both parties and with a lot of goodwill. Today, the Minister of Finance is trying to fulfil an election commitment—but fails to do so because he does not abolish the GST. He comes barging in and says: ''We will replace all that; we will ensure that, from now on, the federal government will be the one to manage this tax''.

As a Quebecer, I would tell myself that it is not really worth co-operating with the federal government, since we are not paid to do that, nor are we compensated like the maritime provinces, who were paid off. Next time, we will say no and there will be no harmonization process. Quebec will say no. We will not get into a system whereby Quebec will lose its authority to set its own tax rate. Worse still, the federal government will raise the tax rate by one percentage point while the premier of Quebec has been doing everything he can, since he came into office, to avoid increasing Quebec's sales tax by one point, and even by half a point.

We cut where we can. We put a lot into streamlining and consultation, and we should let the federal government interfere and increase the sales tax by one percentage point? No way. Quebec will say no. We should lose the capability to fix our own rate? Quebec will say no. We should allow a federal agency to come in and make decisions on behalf of the Government of Quebec? There is no way Quebec will agree to that. You can expect tension between the federal government and Quebec to build up, when things were going so well as regards the consumption tax.

Why are they acting this way? Merely to get votes and to look as if they are fulfilling their promise, an election commitment the Prime Minister himself—and we have it on tape, as I said yesterday—is unable to keep.

With an election coming up, it is sad to see how the government is describing this election measure, because that is what it truly is, and the whole situation. The government is trying to deceive the population by saying that the GST has been eliminated—poof, as my hon. colleague from Rimouski—Témiscouata would put it—when in fact it is making a big deal out of a minor agreement reached with three maritime provinces and takes this opportunity to say: ''As you can see, we can keep our promises''. The fact is that they have done nothing to keep their promise. The GST is still here, there is still some friction between the federal government, Ontario and Alberta, and the expected friction with the Quebec government bodes no good.

We find this measure unfortunate. We also disapprove of the way the Minister of Finance and the Liberal government have dealt with this issue.

[*English*]

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am completely unwilling to concede that paying $1 billion to harmonize the GST in Atlantic Canada is what was promised during the last election campaign. Even the finance minister's weak mea culpa, his tacit admission that although the Liberals were not fulfilling their promise, they were taking a step toward it, is

inadequate. What they promised was that they would scrap the GST, they would kill it, they would abolish it. That is what they said.

• (1050)

The finance minister went to some lengths to read from the red book. I am going to do some reading of my own right now. Although what he read from the red book was accurate, I point out that 80,000 copies came out one month before the election. What was said on national television, what was said for five years leading up to the election and what was said on doorsteps across the country by Liberal members was completely different.

I remind my hon. friends across the way what was said. Here is a quote from the Edmonton *Journal* dated March 1990: ''The Liberal Party would scrap the GST, the current human resources development minister pledged in a nationally televised debate on Monday with finance minister Michael Wilson. The goods and services tax is a regressive tax, he said. It has to be scrapped and we will scrap it''.

Listen to this statement from the Montreal *Gazette* in 1990: ''I would abolish the GST''. That is what the current finance minister said, as quoted in the newspaper.

Listen to this statement by the Prime Minister. He said: ''I want the tax dead''. That is a quote in the Montreal *Gazette* in 1990.

I have another one from 1990. ''The Liberals will scrap the goods and services tax if they win the next general election,'' the current Prime Minister says. ''I am opposed to the GST. I have always been opposed to it and I will be opposed to it always''.

The finance minister can quote from the red book, which was hidden during the election campaign, but the fact of the matter is that he, the Prime Minister and certainly the Deputy Prime Minister made all kinds of commitments that the GST would be gone.

I have a couple more quotes from the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister. In 1991 the Prime Minister said: ''I say we will replace the tax. That is a commitment you will judge me by''. It is still not replaced.

I now point to the big promise of October 18, 1993: ''If the GST is not abolished under a Liberal government I will resign''. That was stated by the Deputy Prime Minister appearing on a CBC TV electronic town hall meeting one week before the election campaign.

The Deputy Prime Minister is still with us. Unbelievably she sits glued to her chair in question period day after day when the government is questioned about why it is that she has not fulfilled her promise to resign. She can turn around and throw darts at members like the member for York South—Weston or the member for Broadview—Greenwood who had the nerve to stand up and support their constituents. However, she sits glued to her chair hoping against hope that somehow her constituents will forget that solemn promise. I can guarantee this House that they will not.

Members across the way do not have to accept my word for this. They can accept the words of their own members. I am not talking just about the members who were thrown out of their caucus or the member who quit on the basis of his own principles. I am talking about other members as well. The member from Mississauga has talked repeatedly about how the government has failed to fulfil its commitment on the GST. The member for Ontario has also been quoted in the media about the government's failure to fulfil its commitment to scrap, abolish and kill the GST. I am not the one who making these arguments. Members across the way have made these arguments very well.

It speaks volumes when members believe so strongly that a commitment was made to scrap the GST that they are willing to put their jobs on the line. That is exactly what happened when the member for York South—Weston very courageously stood and voted against the budget. He saw that the commitment to scrap the GST which had been promised the previous summer was not in the budget. He stood up for his constituents and what happened? He was thrown out of caucus. He was mocked by the Deputy Prime Minister and by the people who used to be his friends. I cannot believe that. He stood up for his constituents. He stood up for Canadians around the country who believe that the government promised to scrap the GST. We applaud him for that. That says something about how widely that promise was made and how many members made it.

• (1055)

Those promises were made all across the country. I am happy to see that the member for York South—Weston stood up for his constituents even if he was ultimately punished by a meanspirited government that simply will not tolerate any semblance of democracy in this place.

Yesterday in question period the Prime Minister talked about the British parliamentary model. He said that according to British parliamentary tradition the Liberals had to throw the member out. That is ridiculous and the Prime Minister knows it. Over the past 20 years members, the British Parliament has defeated 65 money bills and other specific pieces of legislation. In the Canadian system such actions would have brought down the government.

If government members in our system vote against the government, they will be out on their ears. They will be kicked off their committees. They will be punished, which is ridiculous.

If we cannot have democracy in the House of Commons we cannot have democracy anywhere in the country. If we are not allowed to express ourselves freely here, where can we express

ourselves freely? Where is the mouthpiece of the people? Can the people not be represented in this place?

Why does the Prime Minister bring down the iron fist of discipline time after time when he has a chance to let people speak freely and express the wishes of their constituents? He is the most dictatorial Prime Minister we have seen in this country, bar none. I believe that to be a fact and I challenge hon. members across the way to stand and debate that point because it is a fact.

Canadians will not soon forget what the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister by her silence did to the members across the way. I expect other hon. members to stand and defend those members who allowed them to benefit from the promises they made during the campaign. The government was elected on the promise to scrap the GST. Now only two members are paying the price for the government's failure to fulfil that commitment. That is simply wrong. They are the scapegoats.

Let us set aside the fact that harmonization, or this very tepid step toward harmonization, was a breaking of a Liberal promise. Let us speak of the agreement itself. The provinces did not ask for harmonization. That is a fact. The federal government in an effort to save face approached the provinces. It was rejected by the provinces because it could not make harmonization work in a way that made sense to the provinces.

What did the government do? It decided to sweeten the pot. It decided it would kick in $1 billion so three provinces, possibly four, would sign on. Is that fair? What does it mean? It means that people in my riding, the farmer in Bow Island, Alberta, the fisherman in Campbell River, British Columbia, and the line worker in Windsor, Ontario will have to dig into their pockets, come up with some more tax money for the government so it can give it to people in Atlantic Canada.

What ever happened to equal treatment? I see the hon. member from Toronto talking. People in Toronto will have to come up with more money to support people in Atlantic Canada, $1 billion more. How fair is that?

One of the problems we have in this country is that this government has gone to such great lengths to treat people differently. Our party believes in equal treatment. We believe all Canadians should be treated equally. We believe all provinces should be treated equally. This government has bent over backwards to ensure it hands out privileges to certain groups, certain areas of the country and certain people. It has done it time and time again.

• (1100)

I talked in the House last week about the fact that the government handed over $105,000 to the Canadian Bankers Association. That is absolutely ridiculous. It is another example of how the government treats certain groups differently and specially.

Mr. Peters: That is not true.

Mr. Solberg: The Secretary of State for Financial Institutions is pointing at me, saying that it is not true. I invite him to ask the human resources development minister because it was through his department that the bankers association, after the banks made profits of $5.1 billion dollars, received $105,000 for training. How does the hon. member respond to that? I invite him to check his facts and he will find out it is true.

What happened in the Constitution? The government said we should treat certain areas differently. It said it believes in distinct society. It is in favour of granting special status to certain people. We see over and over again how it treats people through its multiculturalism policy; again, special treatment. We simply cannot accept that.

With regard to matters of taxation the same principle must apply. People must be treated equally. We cannot have seven provinces supporting three, or six provinces supporting four, whatever it comes down to. It is absolutely ridiculous.

We have no problem with equalization payments. If provinces want to get on board and support other provinces because they got the short end of the stick over a period of time because of mismanagement by the government, let us support them through equalization.

Do we always have to come up with ever new programs for a few provinces to support the many and at the expense of some people to support other people? That is fundamentally wrong. Not to mention we already have a debt of $580 billion. The Liberals may argue they will not tax people more, they will just borrow it. We already have a debt of $580 billion, so I suggest it is not a very good option. We have to get this mess under control.

I will talk for a moment about some of the particulars of this agreement. The government is to kick over a billion dollars. However, it is not said how it will come up with the money for the other provinces if it does propose to treat all provinces equally.

The province of Ontario would require between $2 billion and $3 billion in order to get the same sort of deal as the Atlantic provinces. Where is the money to come from? Will we ask people in Atlantic Canada to come up with that money? What about the money for Saskatchewan and Manitoba? What about the money for British Columbia? I suggest that will not be an issue because all of those provinces have said it is a non-starter, it will not even happen because the federal government will not come up with the money. Besides, they do not like the overall deal.

The premier of Saskatchewan has pointed out that federal government typically invites you in with a carrot. It gives money at the beginning and then it abandons you and leaves you high and dry. If people deny that, I invite them to look at the mess our health care system is in today. The federal government started out by funding it at 50 per cent and it is now down to 22 per cent. There is a long legacy from successive Conservative and Liberal governments where they get us on board with taxpayer money and then leave us high and dry.

It was the finance minister who, when running for the leadership of the Liberal Party, said harmonization means forever. He said that once taxes were harmonized it would be very difficult to get rid of the GST again. What is he saying to people? Is he saying we should give up on the idea of having lower taxes? Should we give up on getting rid of the most hated tax in Canadian history? Is he saying we must permanently weld into place the most hated tax in Canadian history? By signing these agreements, that is exactly what has happened.

There is another way we can lower taxes. In Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta today there are debates about lower taxes.

● (1105)

We can have lower taxes but the only way of doing it is to balance the budget, and the government cannot get that through its thick head. It goes on and on about how we should streamline and change the administration of the GST.

I say get rid of the GST. The best way and the only way to do that is to balance the budget, eliminate it over a period of time, give Canadians the tax break they so richly deserve instead of going back to them over and over again to gouge more money from them.

The hon. member across the way looks perplexed. Gouge? What can that mean? What does he mean by gouge? Since the hon. members across the way came to power they have taken $8.8 billion from Canadians. That is unbelievable. That is $650 per taxpayer.

The hon. members across the way are wondering how could that happen. All those tax measures, all those revenue measures, all those tax increases were hidden. That is precisely what the government is proposing to do with the GST in Atlantic Canada. It is proposing to hid it so it can push through even more tax increases.

Look at all the revenue measures that have gone through the last couple of years, all hidden. All the excise tax increases, all hidden. It is simply trying to come up with creative new ways to tax people more, and if they doubt that I invite people to simply look at the record of the government. It is despicable. It is simply following along the same lines as the Conservatives.

Between 1993 and 1998 revenues for this government will go up $25 billion, the same amount as the deficit will decrease. In other words, it is exacting all of the decrease in the deficit out of the pockets of taxpayers, and that is unbelievable.

To the member across the way, check your figures. It is a fact and the hon. member knows it. He sits on the finance committee and he knows that to be a fact. We do not want different taxes, we want lower taxes, and Canadians deserve lower taxes.

The provinces have lead the way. It is possible with a bit of resolve and a bit of will. If they set their priorities they can balance the budget. Setting priorities is something this government has not done. So far it has managed to preserve spending for special interest. It has preserved spending for its friends in big business. As I pointed out to the hon. member, it does not mind giving $105,000 to the Canadian Bankers Association.

The hon. member knows we had representations from big business across the country, saying not to subsidize businesses anymore. What does the government do? It continues to subsidize businesses year after year while cutting health care by $3.2 billion, by cutting higher education by $1.2 billion. It is going after the wrong things. We could have a balanced budget if it got its priorities straight and did not bury its head in the sand and deny there is a problem. There is a very serious problem.

I am not the only one concerned about this harmonization deal, nor is it only members of my party. I want to talk about what some of the interest groups are saying, those the minister invited to come forward so he could lobby them to come on side. So far they have not come on side.

Catherine Swift, president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, said Ontario has to be brought on board to make harmonization worthwhile. The province, with 40 per cent of the national economy, says Ottawa's plan would cost residents $2 billion annually and has refused to co-operate in harmonization. Catherine Swift said: ''If Ontario does not go and we end up with a half-hearted harmonization for the next 10 years that is pretty problematic''.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce is a big booster of harmonization, but even it has reservations. Sharon Glover, the group's senior vice-president of government relations, said she is concerned the finance minister will require the GST to be folded into the price tag on goods: ''Hidden taxes are too easy to raise and they promote distrust among consumers''. Frankly, I think consumers have a right to be a little distrustful of the government.

There have been reports that the GST and the new national sales tax would be included in prices but broken down separately on cash register receipts. Of course that was confirmed by the minister this

morning. The point is even the groups the hon. members from across the way say are supportive of this harmonization agreement are not, and there are the facts to prove it.

● (1110)

Canadians want a country in which MPs are free to come to the House of Commons to represent their constituents. That is basic. It is not being unreasonable. Canadians deserve to be represented by their members of Parliament. What the government did in throwing out the member for York South—Weston and in essentially forcing out the member for Broadview—Greenwood because he was too principled to sit among the rabble across the way was reprehensible. The government has trampled on democracy.

I cannot believe the Prime Minister invoked the name of the British Parliament the other day. Edmund Burke and John Locke would be spinning in their graves if they heard those comments coming from the Prime Minister in trying to defend his heavy handedness.

Canadians across the country want a government which keeps its promises. Canadians want a government which, when it says it will scrap the GST, will do it. They expect the Liberal members of Parliament to actually follow through and do that. They must be sorrily disappointed. They must be very cynical about what has happened across the way.

The finance minister's implied apology at the beginning of his speech today suggests they are feeling the pressure. Perhaps there is a little tweak of conscience across the way. That is good. It is nice to see that finally their conscience is catching up with them.

What Canadians want are not different taxes; they want lower taxes. Canadians from coast to coast have suffered under successive Liberal and Conservative regimes which have raised taxes and failed to deal with the debt problem. Every time they raise money, they immediately spend it. That is absolutely unacceptable. Canadians deserve a tax break. The only way that can happen is if the budget is balanced, but the government refuses to announce a date by which it will balance the budget.

The government is hiding the GST in the new deal. It will continue to tax Canadians to death by stealth, as it has done so often since coming to power. There have been 22 tax measures and revenue measures since it has come to power, taking $8.8 billion out of the economy. That represents $650 per taxpayer. That is ridiculous. No wonder we have not had an improvement in our lifestyle, our disposable income since 1980.

Canadians want to save enough for their future. Canadians want to save enough so they can send their children off to university. They want to have money they can retire on. They want to have money they can start businesses with. However, when the government talks only about changing taxes instead of lowering taxes, none of that can happen.

I urge the government to forget this bogus harmonization idea and fulfill its promise by eliminating the deficit and moving immediately to start the process of eliminating the GST.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I realize the official parties have been recognized in their response to the minister. I wonder, as a spokesperson for a group of independents, if I might have a few minutes to make a few comments on this important issue. I seek the unanimous consent of the House to do so.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to allow the member to speak?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: I will ask the question again and I ask members saying no to say it clearly and not whisper it into their benches, hoping I will not hear it.

Is there unanimous consent to allow the member to speak?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Riis: This may not be a point of order, Mr. Speaker, but on a daily basis unanimous consent is sought to move the agenda of the House of Commons, and without exception the New Democratic Party gives its consent to facilitate the business of the House.

I simply wanted to make that point, having been denied the right to speak.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tremblay (Rosemont): Mr. Speaker, in view of the importance of this issue, which has been under discussion for years, could you once more ask the House for unanimous consent so that the hon. member can speak to this?

● (1115)

The Deputy Speaker: Since another member has made the same request on his own behalf, I will ask the question once again. Is there unanimous consent to give the hon. member for Kamloops the right to speak?

[*English*]

An hon. member: No.

The Deputy Speaker: Again, there has been a no indicated. All of the members have heard from where the no came. We will proceed.

* * *

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 1996

Hon. Douglas Peters (for the Minister of Finance, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-31, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 6, 1996.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—INHUMANITY OF PEOPLE TO ONE ANOTHER

Mr. Michel Daviault (Ahuntsic, BQ) moved:

That this House recognize, on the occasion of the 81st anniversary of the Armenian genocide that took place on April 24, 1915, the week of April 20 to 27 of each year as the week to commemorate man's inhumanity to man.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I move a motion requesting that the Canadian government finally recognize the Armenian genocide by designating a week to commemorate the crimes against humanity committed in the past, a commemoration that will help us prevent the same thing from happening again in the future.

I want to point out that the timing of this motion has a symbolic value. On April 15, Jewish communities throughout the world and people of all denominations gathered to commemorate the six million victims of the killing frenzy of the Nazi regime during World War II.

Tomorrow, the Armenian community will be commemorating the genocide that started on April 24, 1915 in the Ottoman Empire, a genocide that left more than 1.5 million victims. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Armenian community in Montreal and elsewhere in this country, and point out its contribution to our collective life.

The resolve with which the Armenian people is conserving its culture, its refusal to forget about the past, and its untiring efforts to gain international recognition for the Armenian genocide deserve everybody's admiration. The designation of a commemorative week would allow citizens of this country to show their respect for people who suffered extermination or fell victim to crimes against mankind, in particular the Armenian and the Jewish communities.

This is not the first time we speak in this House of crimes against mankind or that we deplore past genocides. On April 3 of last year, the hon. member for Don Valley North put forward a motion similar to the one I am moving today. At the time, the Bloc amended the motion, with its mover's assent, to specifically refer to the Armenian genocide. Unfortunately, the hon. member for Halifax, the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, opposed the motion under the pretext that we should not designate any precise period to commemorate genocides because we think of them every day.

• (1120)

The hon. member spoke fine words but failed to act upon them. She contradicted herself when she said first, and I quote: ''I believe genocide is so horrible that the memory of past genocides will always be with us'', but said to conclude and I quote again: ''I must say that I would be concerned if we were to designate a particular period of time for commemorating genocide''.

Faced with such opposition by an hon. member associated with the executive body, the mover withdrew his request for the unanimous consent of the House for a recorded division on the motion and thus allowed the government to avoid voting on the question.

The attitude of the parliamentary secretary may have been due to her ignorance of the terrible lessons of the past, or perhaps it reflected the lack of political fortitude of this government and its lack of determination to defend human rights internationally.

That is why my colleagues and I—and, I hope, the government and other opposition members will join us—will remind the people of the odious crimes of the past. In memory of that past, we will ask the government to adopt from now on a firm position on the respect of human rights in the world, starting with the recognition of the Armenian genocide.

[*English*]

I demand that the government stop selling out Canadian traditions in favour of human rights and to show its true determination by the formal recognition of the Armenian genocide that happened in 1915.

[*Translation*]

Most people have already heard about the holocaust, the genocide of Jewish people by the Nazis. Our parents lived through the second world war know and have told us about it. Recently, the younger generation had to opportunity to see the movie ''Schindler's List'', but how many people are aware of the genocide which took place during the first world war?

Actually, very few people know that a million and a half Armenians were killed and that hundreds of thousands of others were deported in 1915 and after, under order of the Ottoman Empire that ruled Turkey at the time.

The fact that the allied governments and the League of Nations neglected to publicly recognize this genocide and to take sanctions against those responsible for it mat well have had crucial consequences afterwards. Indeed, on the eve of the second world war,

Adolf Hitler said to his SS: ''Who remembers the Armenian genocide today?'' Personally, I refuse to prove Hitler right.

The official opposition recognizes the Armenian genocide and wants to help make it known in this House, to our viewers, to the population at large. But first, let us give a brief historical outline.

The Ottoman Empire was established in the 14th century, after Constantinople fell to the Turks. At one point, this empire covered most of the Middle East and of North Africa. Many Christians lived in this empire, in particular Greeks and Armenians.

The Armeninans lived in Anatolia, the eastern part of modern Turkey. These Christians came under Turkish authority, but they were tolerated because they acted as a link in the trade with the Western world. During the first world war, the government of the Ottoman Empire, fighting against Russia to the east and a Franco-British army to the west, came to consider its Christian subjects as traitors and suspected them of collaborating with the Allies because of their religion. Then came a series of humiliations, followed by arrests, torture and, finally, executions and massive deportations.

In addition to the massacres perpetrated by the soldiers or the civilian population, the massive deportations were secretly aimed at exterminating the Armenians. A large number of Armenians died of hunger, thirst and exhaustion caused by a forced exodus in atrocious conditions. Nowadays, this would be called ethnic cleansing.

A note from the allied forces dated July 17, 1920, and kept in the French national archives described the Armenian genocide in the following terms, and I quote: ''The Armenians were massacred in conditions of incredible barbarity. During the war, the Ottoman government's actions in terms of massacres, deportations and mistreatment to prisoners went far beyond anything it had ever done in these areas. It is estimated that, since 1914, the Ottoman government has massacred, under the untenable pretence of a presumed revolt, 800,000 Armenian men, women and children, and deported more than 200,000 Greeks and 200,000 Armenians. The Turkish government has not only failed to protect its subjects of non-Turkish origin against looting, violence and murder, but a large body of evidence indicates that it also took a hand in organizing and carrying out the most ferocious attacks against communities which it was its duty to protect''.

● (1125)

Unfortunately, the Allies did not follow up on the massacres. They spent more time dividing up the former Ottoman possessions in the Middle East, Syria, Iraq and Palestine, than condemning what has come to be known as the first genocide of the 20th century.

It was not until 1948 that a definition and a formal prohibition of genocide were enshrined in international law. In the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted that year, genocide is defined as any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy in whole or in part a national, ethnic, racial or religious group as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

I remind this House that Canada signed that convention. That is why I do not understand our government's persistent refusal to officially recognize the Armenian genocide. I deplore and condemn that attitude because denying the genocide is playing into the hands of those who committed it and who want their acts to be forgotten, which is the same thing as condoning their actions.

Since the Armenian genocide, in 1915, the inertia and the passivity of the international community have caused other people to suffer large scale massacres. Beside the Jewish people, whom I mentioned earlier, we could mention the war in Biafra, Nigeria, from 1967 to 1970, where a whole civilian population was deliberately starved in front of helpless young French doctors who were later to create the organization Médecins sans frontières.

In 1978, in Cambodia, the Khmers Rouges deported all political opponents into the countryside and into the fields. One million and a half of these deportees never came back and, a few years later, giant mass graves were discovered. Since then, the Cambodian government has built a museum gathering together the evidence of this genocide so that the victims will never be forgotten.

This sort of slaughter is still going on, brought to us live on television for our passive consumption. We watched powerless as the tragedy unfolded in Rwanda and the ethnic cleansing took place in Bosnia. I call upon each member sitting in this House to ask themselves how many other similar massacres we are going to allow. What is our responsibility as elected representatives to prevent other tragedies and suffering?

Since my arrival in this House, I have on many occasions criticized the government for its failure to do anything to recognize the Armenian genocide. But recently, I was shocked and outraged to learn that, in addition to doing nothing in this regard, the government has actually exerted pressure on the City of Montreal

to halt the construction of a monument to the memory of peoples martyred in modern times, particularly the Armenians.

According to representatives of the Armenian national committee, the mayor of Montreal admitted that the Minister for International Cooperation, and member for Papineau—Saint-Michel, had intervened to stop the plan to build a monument commemorating the Armenian genocide. Despite the minister's denials, the mayor of Montreal stood by what he said. The mayor of Montreal has always stood by what he says.

Already in 1990, the Turkish ambassador wrote to Mayor Doré requesting that another monument not refer to the Armenian genocide. These dubious actions make us wonder if the present Canadian government has an official policy of putting a price tag on its principles. They are a reminder of other events in which the Canadian government intervened in an equally deplorable manner.

In 1988, under another government, a senior official of the Department of External Affairs wrote to the Ottawa school board to object to the mention of the Armenian genocide in school textbooks. This official then explained to the media that the Canadian government had taken the action so as not to jeopardize millions of dollars in commercial contracts with Turkey.

When a Canadian monument to human rights was erected in 1991, undue pressure was apparently brought to bear by foreign governments, leading to the suppression of two plaques referring to the Armenian genocide and the massacre in Tiananmen Square.

In fact, since coming to power, this government, like the one before it, has adopted the despicable habit of subordinating the respect of human rights to political and economic interests. Over the years, Canada has acquired an excellent reputation the world over, not just for its respect of human rights within its own borders, but also for its involvement internationally in the promotion of human rights and the values of tolerance and peace, ideals held by all citizens of this country whatever their political stripe. Unfortunately, the recent events in Somalia have tarnished our reputation.

• (1130)

Our government too has recently changed its foreign policy. In the future, in order to ensure the media success of the Prime Minister's tours abroad, any public challenge of these countries' human rights record must be avoided.

The episode of an embarrassed Prime Minister, as 13 year old Craig Kielburger travelled to India to denounce forced child labour in his presence, is most revealing. I remember also the red carpet and honour guard treatment for Rumanian dictator Ceausescu under the Conservative government, which wanted to sell him a nuclear reactor. A few months later, after Ceausescu's overthrow and execution, the Prime Minister of the day rejoiced at the fall of this blood-thirsty tyrant. In the case of Turkey, sales of both a nuclear reactor and weapons are involved. There is spinelessness, whether Conservatives or Liberals are in power.

This type of behaviour, in which injustices are denounced only when it is worthwhile for publicity or political gain, is contrary to traditional Canadian values. Canadians want this government to have principles and to stand up for them at all times. That does not mean that all trade with certain countries must be cut off if we do not approve of their human rights record, but we must make it very clear to them that trading with them does not indicate approval, that it will not stop us from criticizing them if they commit reprehensible acts.

Canadians do not expect complacency from their government; they expect it to denounce injustices throughout the world. I will offer a few examples of flagrant human rights violations which our government prefers to ignore.

After the Gulf War against Iraq, Canada took part in operation ''Provide Comfort'', aimed at protecting the Kurd populations in northern Iraq against bloody attacks by Sadam Hussein's government forces. On the other side of the border at the same time, only a few kilometres away, the Turkish government was arresting and executing hundreds of Kurds rebelling against its authority. But, because the government of Turkey is our ally, we closed our eyes. How could there be good Kurds who merited our protection, and bad Kurds whose fate we did not care about?

During Team Canada's trip to China, and when Chinese officials visited our country, the government remained totally silent in the face of the repression against pro-democracy Chinese since the Tiananmen square massacre. Nor has a word been said about the methodical process of assimilating the Tibetan people. Recently, the hon. members for Longueuil and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce have spoken out against the torture and summary executions in East Timor, which is under military occupation by Indonesia.

Finally, the hundreds of casualties in recent months in Burundi, victims of the clashes between Hutu and Tutsi, make us fear a repeat of the genocide that occurred in neighbouring Rwanda. Although the term ''genocide'' frightens the Canadian government so, it did use it in reference to Rwanda. Will it allow another tragedy to happen when there is still time for something to be done?

In order to show our respect for all the victims of the past and to reaffirm our determination to use all our energy to prevent new massacres, I ask the government to officially recognize the Armenian genocide as a historical fact.

Canada is far from being a leader on this issue. Actually, it is behind the times, because many foreign governments and parliaments have already recognized and condemned the Armenian genocide.

The Permanent People's Tribunal declared, on April 16, 1984: ''The Armenian genocide is an imprescriptible crime against humanity and an international crime for which the Turkish state must take responsibility''.

On August 20, 1985, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights recognized the Armenian massacre by the Ottoman Empire as one of the genocides of the 20th century.

The parliament of the Argentina and the national assembly of Uruguay also recognized it. On June 18, 1987, the European Parliament recognized the historical fact of the Armenian genocide and added that the refusal of the Turkish state to recognize the genocide was an obstacle to Turkey's joining the European Community.

On April 22, 1994, the Douma, or Russian parliament, recognized the Armenian genocide and severely condemned its authors. On April 27, 1994, the Israeli government officially condemned the Armenian genocide despite the fact that Turkey is Israel's ally in the region. The secretary of state for foreign affairs declared:

• (1135)

[*English*]

''We will reject any attempt to erase its record even for some political advantage.''

[*Translation*]

This was an act of courage on the part of the Israeli government.

In May of last year, Bob Dole, the leader of the Republican majority in the Senate of the United States and a Republican candidate in the presidential elections condemned Turkey for persisting in its refusal to recognize the Armenian genocide. He declared:

[*English*]

''I recently with many of my colleagues called on the president, Mr. Clinton, to reaffirm the Armenian genocide as a crime against humanity as he did many times in the 1992 presidential campaign.''

[*Translation*]

Finally, I want to point out that, as early as 1980, the Quebec national assembly and the Ontario legislature, which together represent 60 per cent of the Canadian population, both officially recognized the Armenian genocide and asked the Parliament of Canada to also do so on behalf of all Canadians. I hope that this clear message will finally be heard by the federal government.

In 1994, when he was premier, the ally of the federal government and leader of the Liberal Party of Quebec, Mr. Daniel Johnson, stated: ''The anniversary of the Armenian genocide reminds us of one of the most tragic moments in the history of our century and moves us to express our deep sympathy for this people''. We are not going to water down the proposal by trying to replace the term genocide.

The German government, which long ago acknowledged its moral responsibility in the Jewish genocide by the Nazi regime and has offered reparation, must be given credit. The German Criminal Code even provides for sanctions against people who try to deny this historical fact. More recently, the Russian government courageously acknowledged its responsibility in the execution in 1940 of 4,500 Polish officers in the Katyn forest. Turkey has historical responsibilities and must bear them.

On several different occasions, a number of members of this House have spoken about the Armenian genocide. It is now time to act. I ask all members to convince their colleagues to vote in favour of this motion and to take advantage of the 81st anniversary of the Armenian genocide to take a courageous stand on behalf of our fellow men and women who face difficult circumstances in countries where democracy has not yet prevailed.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: I would inform the House that because of the ministerial statement, Government Orders will be extended by 72 minutes.

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have followed very carefully the comments made by the hon. member for Ahuntsic. I want to take this opportunity to thank him for his presentation but also I want to remind him that the way he went about doing this was quite upsetting to me. However, that is said and done, it has passed and I want to go forward to the future.

The hon. member made a comment in his statement that the mayor of Montreal promised to erect a statue to commemorate the genocide of the Armenians in 1915. Then he went on to blame the federal government for intervening in this matter.

I want the record to show clearly that neither federal government in any way, shape or form nor the Department of Foreign Affairs were involved in the promise made by the mayor of Montreal. I want him to correct that statement please because that is not the case. The Government of Canada does not get involved in the erection or the removal of monuments.

I was previously involved with the Vietnamese monument here in the city of Ottawa. The Government of Canada took the same position when the Vietnam monument was erected. That is the same position the government has taken in the case of the monument in Montreal which was promised, reneged on and not delivered by the mayor of Montreal.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Daviault: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his comments. I want to point out that *The Gazette* reported comments attributed to members of the national Armenian committee concerning the monument to be erected in Montreal to commemorate the genocide. The comments of the mayor of Montreal were also reported, and the mayor did not deny them. But these comments were denied—

Mrs. Bakopanos: The mayor's comments or the minister's comments?

Mr. Daviault: The mayor's comments were denied by the minister. No, the mayor did not confirm the minister's comments.

● (1140)

The Minister of International Cooperation and of the mayor of Montreal disagree on what happened. When I asked a question in this House, the member for Saint-Léonard told me that the minister had only restated the way the Canadian government dealt was handling this issue. It is already quite something to repeat that the Government of Canada prefers not to use the word genocide, that it wants to use the words atrocities and tragedy, but not the word genocide. This word was used for the genocide in Rwanda, but the government still does not want to use it concerning Armenia.

Today, you will have a chance to vote on the motion, on the term genocide. If you want to take on the unenviable task of changing the motion by deleting the term genocide, you will be showing your true colours. Then, Armenians and Canadians will know where you stand on this issue.

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the opposition member on introducing this motion in the House. I would point out, as did my colleague, that it was the member for Don Valley North who initially introduced this motion in the House of Commons.

Secondly, I would perhaps echo my colleague's question and comments. It is all very well to read the comments by the mayor of Montreal in the papers, but there is no evidence. I would like the hon. opposition member to provide written or verbal proof that the minister or a representative of the Canadian government said we were opposed to a monument being erected.

There is no proof, it was only the mayor's word. It is the mayor of Montreal, Mr. Bourque, who is responsible for this matter. He must assume his responsibilities and keep his word to the Armenian community and to others, because the monument is not just for the Armenian genocide, but for all crimes against humanity. We were 100 per cent in favour of the idea, and there is no evidence to the contrary. I would prefer people did not invent stories and did not attribute remarks to someone, if they are not what the person said in this House.

I would also like to ask the opposition member what led him to raise this motion in the House at this specific point in time.

Mr. Daviault: Mr. Speaker, as far as the first part, with respect to the monument, is concerned, the Government of Canada has no business getting involved in this matter. I recalled the remarks attributed to the mayor of Montreal. I recalled the denials by the minister and I recalled the fact that the mayor of Montreal did not confirm the minister's denials. Enough has been said about this responsibility.

I agree with you that the monument must be erected and that it is the responsibility of the mayor of Montreal. However, when the example of inaction on the matter of the Armenian genocide comes from as high up as our government—either Conservative or Liberal—which refuses to recognize the genocide, we can hardly criticize others for lack of courage when we ourselves lack such courage.

Last year, the member for Don Valley North acted very positively in making his proposal. However, as I said in my speech, he had asked for unanimous consent for a vote and this was denied by a parliamentary secretary. As parliamentarians, we know what this means. It means that the motion is dead.

● (1145)

This year, using an opposition day, one of our exceedingly rare opposition days where a vote may be taken, we are forcing a vote on this issue and on the method, because today or tomorrow there will be 3,000 or 4,000 Armenians on the Hill, who will judge our actions as parliamentarians today. Let us act courageously.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank the member for Ahuntsic for tabling this motion in the House.

The points raised by the motion deal with universal rights, equality, and the fight for freedom the underprivileged peoples of the world have been waging since the dawn of civilization.

[*English*]

I support the principles in the hon. member's motion. In fact I applaud them. It is for this reason that I would like to propose an amendment to the motion. I move:

> That the motion be amended (1) by deleting the word ''genocide'' and substituting therefor the words ''tragedy which claimed some 1.5 million lives'', and (2) by inserting immediately after ''1915'' the words ''and in recognition of other crimes against humanity''; and (3) by deleting all of the words after the words ''as the week'' and by substituting the words ''of remembrance of the inhumanity of people toward one another''.

I would like to see the scope of the motion broadened to cover all peoples who have suffered in their quest for justice and freedom.

Therefore I would like to see us acknowledge a tragic systemic massacre and degradation of the Armenian people which began in 1915 under the Ottoman empire and recognize the day April 24 as a day to mourn for those who suffered. Yet on April 15 we also mark the holocaust as a day to remember with sorrow the slaughter of millions of Jews and on April 27 we celebrate the death of apartheid, the triumph of freedom over the decades of legislated racism, bigotry and murder of black South Africans.

This amendment seeks to remember all of these peoples and more. It proposes to set a week to mourn man's inhumanity to man, all the women who for millennia have been raped in the name of power, all the children who have been orphaned in the struggle for freedom, all those who have been humiliated, degraded, imprisoned, killed because of their religion, the colour of their skin or their sexual orientation.

To narrow this motion to recognize the plight of one people is laudable in its intent but it misses the opportunity to make a statement on behalf of those who do not have a special day of remembrance but who have suffered similar injustices over the history of humankind.

The shameful history of man's inhumanity has never been selective, nor has brutality ever been focused in one place, one community or one people. The tragedies such as we mourn on April 15, 24 and 27 may have been brought on by discrimination, bigotry and the misuse of power but it has not been limited to a particular race, religion or ethnic group. The brutal murder and incarceration of women, men and children simply because they wished to worship their own god or walk side by side in equality and justice with other members of the human race in kinship and respect is a tragedy the entire human family must bear with shame.

[*Translation*]

The motion moved by the honourable member for Ahuntsic reflects the fundamental values of the people of Canada. As a people we have opened our arms and our country to victims of pain, tyranny and injustice.

[*English*]

We are recognized the world over as a people who not only believe in peace, justice and respect but we practise it. We have legislated it. Our multiculturalism policy has ensured that all of the diverse people who make up our nation must live in respect of each other's culture, religion, race or ethnicity. We seek not to assimilate others but to allow for the ultimate freedom of the individual to pursue what makes him or her unique and special.

We believe that all Canadians can be one people united under one flag and one nation and yet celebrate and respect the diversity of our geography and our people. Multiculturalism is part of making sure we are sensitive to the pain of those Canadians who may at one time have been victimized by the inhumanity of war or by bigotry and oppression. Multiculturalism promotes healing and fosters a cohesion of people.

• (1150)

By and large we are a country of immigrants and refugees within an aboriginal country. We have come together from each corner of the world to build a society, recognized not for a particular language or a specific skin colour but by the values that bind us together, values of justice, equality, respect and peaceful resolution to conflict.

We are a unique nation. We are the global nation and we wear the title with pride. We stand as a role model to the world of a nation where all people can find peace, order and good government, can co-exist in harmony with intercultural understanding and sharing, with respect for differences.

Here in Canada this motion will strengthen the way we hope to build a nation. It will send a message to other nations and people who struggle under the yoke of oppression that in Canada there is a policy of respect, that here they can be free to worship their god and walk down the street equal to other Canadians, equal under the eyes of the law, free from fear of discrimination as enshrined in our Constitution, free to dress in the manner of their choice, free to participate in the benefits of this society fully, and to accept and fulfil the responsibilities of a Canadian citizen in equality.

If we are to change our world, if we are to hope that one day humankind can live together in peace and respect, we must always be mindful of the cruelty of tyranny, of the massacres of peoples, of the incarceration, degradation and inhumanity that man has wrought on each other in the name of power, intolerance and religion.

This motion would enshrine the week of April 20 to April 27 as a week to remember, to mourn and to celebrate the martyrs who have gone before in history, like the Armenians we remember today, so that the pursuit of freedom and justice will remain clear in our hearts and in our legislation, so that we may remain on guard wherever human rights are in jeopardy, as we have done whenever we have traded. We have taken the opportunity to speak to leaders of regimes that do not hold the same human rights values which we hold dear. We have a reputation as peacekeepers around the world.

We will learn from the lessons of the past. It is fitting this motion is placed before the House of Commons of the Canadian Parliament. As Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said to our Prime Minister at the United Nations 50th anniversary, the world has always looked to Canada with hope, as a people who have lived together in diversity with respect, as a people who have sought peaceful resolution to conflict.

Let us not disappoint them. Let us remain true to the mandate of our unique policy of multiculturalism which seeks to strengthen a cohesive, respectful, inclusive and democratic society and a shared sense of identity reflective of the diversity of Canadian people.

The Deputy Speaker: The amendment is being studied and it has not been ruled as being receivable. As soon as possible, the Chair will make a ruling on that matter.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank our colleague for the sensitivity she has always displayed concerning the issues of racism and social justice. However, I want to make sure I understand the true meaning of the message she has delivered this morning.

She shares the concerns of members as a whole regarding the use of violence which has become too widespread throughout this century. I want to make sure that she believes, as I do, that violence, whatever its form, is unacceptable.

However, there is in Canadian policy a certain amount of inconsistency I have trouble understanding; my colleague will perhaps take the time to clarify this for me. The Canadian government has committed $500,000 to set up a human rights tribunal to investigate war crimes and wrongdoings in the former Yugoslavia. This international tribunal will be made up of nine judges, including one Canadian.

We followed very closely the statements made by the Canadian government on Rwanda. In both cases, the Canadian government had no qualms about talking of genocide. The reason being that, when it comes to words, there is a scale of sorts to describe things.

● (1155)

My colleague will agree that genocide is violence at its worst. Why is it that the Canadian government does not hesitate to talk about genocide regarding events in Rwanda? Why is it that it has no qualms about freeing $500,000 in the case of the former Yugoslavia? Why is it reluctant to describe for what they were the events which occurred in Armenia in 1915 and had the hallmark of a genocide, and to call a spade a spade?

[*English*]

Ms. Fry: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has said very clearly that Canada has given aid and brought its own particular principles to areas like Rwanda, Bosnia and other parts of the world where there has been inhumanity to man.

We are supportive of the hon. member's motion. We are just changing the words to express the tragedy of the 1.5 million people who were killed. We are also widening the scope of the motion to make the week one of remembrance for all people, such as April 15 to commemorate the holocaust and April 27 for the death of apartheid. We are just trying to widen the scope of the motion so that it will be a commemorative week for all people who have suffered over the years.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, why in her amendment to the main motion does the hon. member recommend the deletion of the word genocide?

Ms. Fry: Mr. Speaker, we are recommending substituting for the word ''genocide'' the words ''tragedy which claimed some 1.5 million lives''. Genocide is a specific term. We do not feel we can use that term at this time. We are mentioning the deaths of 1.5 million people. We are supporting the motion, but we are broadening the scope of it.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, what we have heard is part of the problem we have in the House where there is a play on words and we do not say what we mean. On a number of occasions I have had cause to lament that sort of thing and be upset by it. Obviously, we are all opposed to genocide and the planned killing of people by their own governments or by other governments. We must make a clear statement to all humanity.

It is with pleasure that I speak to the motion which condemns genocide as an instrument of national policy. While there are few problems with the wording of the proposed amendment, I am going to suggest at least one subamendment at the end of my presentation.

As the foreign affairs critic for the Reform Party, I am pleased to say that I will be supporting the motion with the amendments. It is important that we clearly let the world know what we think of these acts.

When we received the motion yesterday, it was difficult to decide how to approach it. In many respects it is a motherhood issue. We are all opposed to genocide. This morning I intend to try and develop my and my party's approach to the subject and try to put a little more humanity and understanding into it.

Genocide strikes at the very root of humanity. It is the sort of thing that causes us to shudder no matter where in the world it takes place. When a government or a group attempts to obliterate a people through violent means to achieve their own selfish political goals, all humanity is diminished and suffers because of it.

● (1200)

Those who have committed genocide often attempt to blame the victims or deny reality, but the truth must be remembered. To honour the memory of the victims we must remind our children of

what happened. We must not let these memories die. Hopefully they will prevent future atrocities.

It is a cliche, but a true one when we say those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. This truth has haunted us in the House of Commons over the past couple of years as we have watched in horror as hundreds of thousands of people, if not millions, have been slaughtered in places like Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

The saddest thing about these recent genocides is that historians 100 years from now will probably see them as only two of a long series of genocides stretching throughout the century. The ultimate horror is that there have been so many mass slaughters this century it is tough to keep track of them. The future does not bode well for stopping them, even though we say this must be the last.

There is the Armenian genocide that this motion speaks to. We have the Jewish Holocaust. We have Stalin's purges. We have the Chinese situation in Nanking. We have mass murder in East Timor, the disappearance in Central and South America of many people, tribal slaughter in Burundi, government sponsored famine in Ethiopia, and the list goes on and on. As I said at the beginning, it touches all of us as human beings living on this planet.

Each one of these represents a human disaster of epic proportions, but all have been reduced to historical footnotes because there are so many. That is why I believe the House should vote in favour of the motion, which serves to remind us and helps us to keep a vigilance; a vigilance that we cannot forget history.

The motion does not cost anything, but it is a powerful show that the House is not indifferent to genocide. It shows that members in this place prefer to speak out rather than perpetually sit in an uncomfortable silence waiting for the next disaster.

A few members today have presentations which will deal specifically with the genocide of the Armenians during the early years of this century. I would like to support those members but I must tell them I do not know a lot about Armenian history and I will leave it to my colleagues to talk about it in their presentations. I will deal with several other issues that relate to genocide with which I am more familiar.

Obviously we could go back to World War II and the Jewish Holocaust. It is amazing that some people deny this happened. Obviously it did happen. It should have been a valuable lesson in history, but unfortunately it was not. The Jews in Europe had suffered for centuries from prejudices and intolerance, but the rise of Hitler brought the hatred of Jews to a whole new level.

Under the Nazis the Jews became the scapegoat for all the ills of society. Hatred became a unifying force and the Jews were systematically dehumanised by Nazi propaganda to such a degree that their mass murder went from being an outrageous idea to the final solution to Germany's problems.

The use of propaganda and the media to dehumanise and discredit people who were subsequently massacred is unfortunately a tradition that has stood the test of time. Therefore this is the first lesson we must learn. We might call it the CNN factor. The use of television, the use of communication today is an important part of ploys used by many terrorist groups. Last week we had an example of that. We must be conscious of it. We must remember the media can be used to promote hate and that it must be monitored in Canada and throughout the world.

• (1205)

We must have set standards in the international community so that we see both sides of the story, not simply the side the CNN reporter wants us to see. We must not let the media be manipulated by various powers. I am sure some terrorist groups have a training program which involves the use of the media. We must be conscious of that and vigilant that we get both sides.

Another lesson we learned from the Jewish Holocaust is the indifference of the international community. As Europe's Jews desperately tried to escape they found many countries would not accept them. Not only that, the international community appeased Germany and continually caved in to its increasingly outrageous policies. This gave the perception of silent approval of Germany's actions, a perception that proved fatal to over six million Jews.

Clearly the international community can never again sit by in stunned silence while such outrages occur. We must be vigilant, speak out and take firm action when the need arises.

I will now talk about a couple of recent examples of genocide. I will start with the former Yugoslavia and then I will talk a bit about Rwanda and conclude with an overall approach to genocide itself.

The Deputy Speaker: I wonder if the hon. member would permit a very brief interruption. The member has indicated he wishes to make a subamendment. It would probably be of assistance if he knew what the Chair has ruled on the previous amendment. With his permission I would like to give that ruling now.

The amendment proposed by the secretary of state is an acceptable amendment. Accordingly, when the member for Red Deer wishes to make a subamendment he may wish to keep in mind the amendment was accepted by the Chair.

Mr. Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, that does clarify what I will be doing at the end of my presentation.

I will use a couple of examples. I will use recent ones familiar to the House. Those still speak to the motion of the Armenian question.

When we look at the former Yugoslavia, I know members do not need a history lesson on some of the problems. However, there are a few facts we need to outline as to exactly what happened.

It is fair to say, hopefully in an unbiased evaluation of the situation, that there is no side right or wrong. There are lots of wrongs but it is a matter of not being able to pick the good guy from the bad guy. That is a big problem in today's post-cold war situation in which we find ourselves.

It is often easier for people of the world community to sit idle while these wrongs are occurring. I have mentioned that the media plays a major role in promoting and sometimes in formulating ideas within our community which are incorrect.

We must also recognize in the former Yugoslavia that this is a civil war. It is not like the gulf war. Civil wars are different from where we have an aggressor attacking another country. In looking at the facts we must always recognize that. We must look at the external forces which come into play when such acts of genocide occur. We must also always understand history and look back however far we have to to understand the nature of the problem.

If we look at the former Yugoslavian problem we need to go back at least 1300 years and even back to Greek and Roman times.

● (1210)

We can go through the 6th century and the Slavic tribes as they worked through that area. We can look at the effect of Rome and Constantinople, the Catholic and Orthodox church in the 10th century. We can go through the Islamic expansion of the 14th century. Very clearly we start to see the effects of not only the people but of external forces coming into play.

We have to also recognize the way governments rule. The Muslim rule of the 15th century was pretty grim stuff. The Turkish empire and the way it handled things was a pretty rugged way of running a government by our standards.

As we move to more modern times we see the influence of the Treaty of Berlin of 1878. We look at the alliances that occurred up to the end of the first world war. Then we look at what happened during the mid-war period and then on to the second world war and the alliances there. In Hitler's alliances with Croatia, 400,000 Serbians living in Croatia were massacred because of outside forces. They were massacred for all kinds of reasons.

Then we come to Tito's time. Tito ruled Yugoslavia with an iron hand from 1945 until 1980 when he died. There are six republics and we must understand the history of those republics and why they lived in so-called peace.

From there in 1991 when the Croats and Slovenians declared independence, I guess not unlike Quebec's declaring independence from Canada, we can see the terrific pull that would have on the people of that country.

The point is that no matter what history tells us and no matter what politics tells us, genocide is not acceptable under any conditions. Countries and the peoples of the world must find a way to deal with their problems, but not to those kinds of extremes. That has to come loud and clear from countries like ours. It has to come loud and clear from the UN. The UN desperately needs to be modernized and become efficient so it can respond to these issues.

If there is one thing we can blame ourselves and the world community for it is the inability, the lack of desire, or whatever the reason, to modernize a 50-year old organization that can today not deal with its problems because it is top heavy, bureaucratic, under funded, inefficient, and so on. We must deal with that problem. That is our problem. It will lead to future genocide in other countries if we do not have a UN that can respond effectively, efficiently and quickly. We are all concerned and desire that. We have to have a plan. We have to do something about it. We as parliamentarians must demand that we take that leadership role as Canadians.

I move on to Rwanda. I know members across have heard my speech on Rwanda before. I do not intend to repeat all of that but I do think it demonstrates something that was very graphic to everyone. The genocide that occurred in Rwanda was unbelievable. It is certainly in all of our minds. We saw it because of CNN.

In 1985 I was on an Air France 747 with 20 people. We landed in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. My wife and I got off the plane. The rest said ''good luck''. I did not really know what they were talking about, but it seemed like we had landed in the jungle, and the plane left. Then we had armed guards around us and we went through the immigration procedure and had all of our medical certificates and documents in order.

● (1215)

As we moved away from the airport we moved into gorgeous countryside that is very similar to what we might see in Belgium.

As I only have two minutes left I would like to move a subamendment. I move:

> That the amendment be amended by inserting after the word ''tragedy'' the following: ''of genocide.''

It would then read the ''tragedy of genocide.''

As we went through that countryside we saw the markets. We spent close to a month in that country. We were out in the villages, we were travelling with a local Rwandan gentleman who

introduced us to his parents and his relatives. In the markets we saw the salt and the utensils. We saw the barter system. Some people walked 20 and 30 miles to get to the market.

We went to the tea plantations developed by China. We saw the hotels and some of the infrastructure that the Belgians and the French had built. As we got more and more involved in that country we saw some warnings. The NGOs told us there was unrest. The church said there was unrest. The French troops said there was unrest. The United Nations said there was unrest.

I cannot help now thinking, was that what it was like in the period from 1930 when the people knew that something was wrong in Germany?

Obviously genocide is something about which we must all speak. It must be done through the UN, through this Parliament. It is a motherhood topic for all of us.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): The Chair would like to advise that the subamendment submitted by the hon. member for Red Deer is receivable and accepted.

Mr. Michel Daviault (Ahuntsic, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for his subamendment and his vigilance.

As I expected, the government changed the word ''genocide'' to the word 'tragedy''. It is not acceptable to us. It is not acceptable to the purpose of the motion.

I thank the hon. member but I noticed he was perhaps missing a couple of minutes. Maybe he could expand on his speech and talk to us a bit more about human rights.

Mr. Mills (Red Deer): Madam Speaker, I had planned to close with the questions that I believe we as part of the international community must ask, particularly as they relate to Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. I am sure many years ago they could have applied to Germany or Armenia.

How much intervention would it take to stop what happened? That question has to be asked. In the case of Rwanda, very little. In the former Yugoslavia, probably a lot more. We are probably seeing that now with IFOR.

• (1220)

Second, who should have been responsible? Who is responsible? Are we all responsible? I put forward that we are all responsible for this, that this issue goes far beyond partisan politics, and we are responsible as the world community.

Third, will this happen again? Unfortunately I think the answer is yes. We must deal with this problem. I have suggested the UN is certainly an avenue.

How much external pressure causes this sort of thing to happen? What if there had not been so much external pressure on these countries? I am most familiar with Rwanda. If there had not been the colonial influence of the Belgians and the French, then what? Maybe this is going back to something we cannot have any control over, but we must ask these questions and we must find answers to them for the future. We must look at our history, our past, to understand the future. That is so critical in this whole thing.

I thank the member for the opportunity to complete my remarks.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am glad I have the opportunity to participate in this debate on genocides, not only the Armenian one, but all those that took place in other countries and are still happening today.

I was listening when the previous member said we should all be concerned. I think he is perfectly right. This is a question of human rights and everybody should be concerned.

As critic for the Bloc Quebecois, I was particularly pleased to hear that the Leader of the Opposition chose to give the first speech on that motion. I feel it is important for a party leader to state his position and give his point of view on such an important issue.

Last week, I participated with colleagues of all parties in a conference on official development assistance. Some representatives of non-governmental organizations said they were still hoping, after two and a half years of Liberal presence in the House, after two and a half years of Liberal government, for the first speech of the Prime Minister of Canada on the human rights issue. But the Prime Minister will not deliver any speech on human rights. He indicated that very clearly during the first tour of Team Canada in Asia.

At that time, the Prime Minister said: ''I could give a headline-making speech on that issue, but I prefer to open markets and promote trade. The walls will eventually come down''. The problem is he did not say when. Will it take 50 years for the walls to come down?

These words show clearly that this government does not consider human rights to be an important issue. However, if we want to deal with poverty in the world, we must consider sustainable development. And the notion of sustainable development encompasses greater issues like democratic development, the participation of populations in their own development, and human rights. We will get nowhere if we think we can help developing countries without taking into consideration sustainable development, human rights, democratic development and the importance that should be given to these concepts.

• (1225)

I am convinced that the tragedy suffered by Jews during the second world war has already been mentioned this morning. I am quite sure that Cambodia was also mentioned because hundreds of thousands, maybe millions, of Cambodians were killed by the Khmers Rouges.

Maybe we did not talk enough about the Sudan, this forgotten African country which, for the last ten years, has suffered a savage war pitting the north against the south. So far, more than one million people have been eliminated. Yet, nobody talked about the Sudan.

Of course we talked about the former Yugoslavia and the ethnic cleansing there. The hon. member who spoke before me talked about Rwanda and the massacres that took place in that country. Unfortunately, history repeats itself and we do not learn for past errors.

After the last war, the heads of states assembled in San Francisco to create the United Nations said: ''No more wars''. I am sure they were sincere. However, war continues to be a dreadful scourge.

There is a question related to genocides and human rights which, I think, is too easily ignored. It is the whole question of impunity. Why do we have genocides decade after decade? I think one of the reasons is that the international community has not found an effective way of dealing with people responsible for genocides.

During the last three or four years we have seen the same thing happen in Haiti. We know that 3,000 or 4,000 people were killed. Yet, what happened to General Cédras? He got a pocketful of money and was told to go. The same happened with Duvalier, the previous dictator. For years, dictators inflicted torture on the Haitian people. But when the dictator is finally forced out of power, he does not suffer any consequences.

In the former Yugoslavia, we see people responsible for ethnic cleansing parading in front of television cameras, and the international community seems unable to do anything.

The saddest part of all is that it never stops. There are other hot spots and, regrettably, Canada maintains relations with countries where torture is allowed and practised. We think of China where human rights are systematically violated and freedom of speech is denied: political dissidents are muzzled, human rights advocates are attacked, and so on.

We think of Nigeria where dissidents are eliminated. But we have to point something out here. Because Nigeria is not a very powerful nation, Canada might try to take economic sanctions against it. Will we do the same thing against China? Will we do the same thing against Indonesia? And against Vietnam? We practice double talk, and pay lip service to human rights.

I received recently from the international co-operation minister a paper about the way CIDA intends to promote human rights. It says: ''Strengthening the civilian population's role and capacities in order to increase its participation in decision making. Reinforcing democratic institutions. Increasing the qualifications of public officials. Enhancing the capacities of organizations whose functions are to defend and promote human rights. Encouraging leaders to respect human rights more, to govern democratically and to manage public affairs efficiently''.

While speeches are being made, while fine statements are issued, the Canadian government, in its foreign policy, is going after one thing only: trade relations. Trade is more important than anything else.

I want to bring up once again the sad case of Tran Trieu Quan, one of my constituents, who was actively involved in the main thrust of Canada's foreign policy. He tried to do business with Vietnam, and has been in prison for two years now. The Canadian government says it is unable to do anything. The Canadian government uses development assistance programs not to promote and defend human rights and to promote economic development, but to promote trade relations. So it is providing about $60 million over a few years in assistance to countries such as Vietnam, not to protect human rights, but in the hope that, in doing so, it will open doors to trade, while it could and should use development assistance budgets to promote and defend human rights all over the world.

• (1230)

It is extremely disappointing that in its foreign policy Canada has so easily given up on what made its glory. What has made the glory of Canada? Development assistance programs, peace missions and human rights defence. The government has simply given up.

[*English*]

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, earlier today the hon. member for Ahuntsic referred to a monument in Montreal as one the federal government intervened in and did not approve of.

Maybe the member now has a chance to correct the situation and tell us if the premier of Quebec, the former leader of his party, will erect the monument and make sure of the right way of doing it to his colleague, the mayor of Montreal. Would he make that undertaking to the House today?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paré: Madam Speaker, it is funny to witness the consummate skills developed by the hon. members opposite. They have developed a kind of automatic reflex so that every time they are faced with a sensitive issue, on which their government refuses to take position, they ask why the Quebec government is not doing something.

Are we not here in the House of Commons? Why should Quebec always take the lead? Is this House, this government, not able to show the way once in a while? But no, the same old reflex always takes over and they turn their attention to the Quebec government.

In their eyes, the Quebec government's lack of involvement in a sensitive matter justifies their own government's inaction. This is a disgrace.

[*English*]

Mr. Assadourian: Madam Speaker, I would like to give the hon. member a chance to correct the situation and put his money where his mouth is. I regret to say that on that side of the House talk is cheap.

A few years ago the province of Quebec passed a resolution about genocide, condemning it. The premier of Quebec a few months ago was to erect the monument in Quebec City or Montreal, wherever it may be in the province of Quebec. They can have more more than one, not just in Montreal.

Why does he not undertake to the House that he will be speaking to the premier of Quebec to make sure he erects the monument, on behalf of all Quebecers, in the province of Quebec so we can all take example from it? Maybe afterward we can put a monument in Ottawa for all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paré: Madam Speaker, after listening to the hon. member for Don Valley North, I assume he is about to move to Quebec so he can get elected and exert some influence on the Quebec government. That may be his only way to get involved.

The Quebec government has already passed a resolution like the one we are trying to have passed in this House. The Quebec government has no lesson to receive, especially from the Liberal Party. What we are trying to find out today is if the Liberal Party, the Liberal government will agree to recognize history and to make a commitment without always trying to dodge the issue and have someone else become involved in its place. The ball is now in their court and I hope they will vote in favor of the motion.

• (1235)

I hope they will vote to recognize the Armenian tragedy.

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it almost brings tears to my eyes when I see how members of the opposition now defend the rights of an ethnic community in Quebec. It almost brings tears to my eyes because, in the recent referendum campaign, some of the leaders whom they support said that the referendum was lost because of ethnic groups and rich people in the province of Quebec.

To this day, the former leader of the official opposition, Mr. Bouchard, has not disavowed that statement. I find it strange that opposition members have now become the great protectors of the Armenian community.

If there is living proof here of a member of the Armenian community who looks after his community, it is definitely the hon. member for Don Valley North, who also tabled a resolution in this House to continue to protect the interests of that people.

This government is the one protecting such interests. Moreover, it is strange that a party whose mandate it is to destroy our country would try to teach us lessons in human rights.

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Madam Speaker, April 24 of this year will mark the 81st anniversary of the Armenian genocide that took place in 1915 during the First World War. And what a sad anniversary it will be. This first genocide of the 20th century, which would unfortunately be followed by many others, is still today not recognized by the Canadian government. I rise, therefore, in support of this motion to recognize the week of April 20 to 27 as the week to commemorate man's inhumanity to man.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay homage to and to offer my profound sympathy to the Armenian people, especially the 1,540 families of the Armenian community in Laval, who found a welcome in Quebec, where they take part in and contribute to the development of Quebec society.

The genocide of the Armenian people by the Turkish government began on April 24, 1915. That fateful day marked the beginning of this episode in history that ended with over a million people dead and thousands of others deported. It was the first of a series of genocides against peoples, for a people claiming the right to exist runs the risk of being massacred. As proof, we have the Holocaust during World War II, the recent massacres in Rwanda and Burundi, and obviously the situation in Bosnia, all examples showing the risk that those daring to claim status as a people still run in the 20th century.

All these events are a reminder to us that governments all too often use force and violence to repress causes that they do not agree with.

As I mentioned earlier, the genocide of the Armenian people culminated in the death of 1.5 million people and the deportation of over 500,000 others. Not only did the Turkish government almost totally take over Armenia's territory, but it also did not hesitate to destroy a number of religious and educational establishments. The very structures of the Armenian community were therefore destroyed. The rights of Armenians were completely denied, with the goal of eliminating a people that were considered hostile to Turkey.

Memory is often dulled with the passage of time, but democracy must never allow the truth to be denied. This first genocide of the 20th century was and still is a crime against humanity and civilization. Furthermore, in resolution No. 2391 adopted on November 26, 1968, the United Nations declared that genocide was a crime against humanity, and that there is no term of limitation for this crime, regardless of the time or place it was committed.

• (1240)

At that time, of course, there was no UN, and so no country dared clearly denounce the Armenian genocide, no state demanded that Turkey own up to these odious actions.

Today, within a Parliament that is internationally known for its respect of democracy and is quick to proclaim itself a defender of human rights, we have the opportunity to adopt a motion acknowledging the Armenian genocide and to call to mind other genocides throughout history. It is the duty of the international community and of Parliament to clearly condemn such actions, so as to put an end to violence between peoples.

The international community unanimously denounced the Nazi regime of Adolf Hitler, in the aftermath of the Holocaust. The Nuremberg international war crimes tribunal passed judgment on those responsible for crimes against humanity and civilization.

The Armenian genocide, however, remains unpunished, yet it is an undeniable historical fact. Some states, moreover, have acknowledged this genocide. For instance, on April 10 1980, the Quebec National Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution condemning the Armenian genocide. The legislative assembly of Ontario did the same, also in 1980.

In the 16 years since 1980, close to two thirds of the Canadian population have clearly come to recognize the genocide against the Armenian people. What we are asking of the Government of Canada is that the truth be acknowledged today, no matter how cruel a truth it is.

In its condemnation of the Armenian genocide in a resolution adopted in 1987, the European Parliament stated that ''the present Turkish government's refusal to acknowledge the genocide, along with other more recent violations of international law by this country, constitute impassable obstacles to any examination of the future membership of Turkey in the European community''.

How can something that seems so clear to the European community not be equally clear to the Canadian government? What is this government waiting for, before it acknowledges and condemns the historical fact of the Armenian genocide?

Today we are marking the 81st anniversary of that genocide. The passage of time is a poor excuse for refusing to take a stand and to condemn these actions. On the contrary; the acknowledgement of the genocide by the states of the international community offers proof that such actions are unacceptable and that no future genocides will occur without an outcry. Canada sees itself as a defender of democracy and human rights. It must condemn this genocide as it condemned the Holocaust.

Finally, I must point out that on November 2, 1948, Canada signed the International convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide, and this has been in effect since December 2, 1950. There is no statute of limitation for the crime of genocide, and it is not yet too late for the Canadian government to join with the other states that have denounced the Armenian genocide and to show consistency with its past positions, respecting this international convention of which it is a signatory.

The promotion and protection of universally recognized human rights must be our principal motivation in the debate on this motion. Economic interests must not be allowed to dictate our actions when the respect of basic human rights is concerned. By passing this motion, the House will be showing its unwavering support of the respect of individual and collective rights.

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to make a comment further to the remarks made by my colleague, but, particularly, I would like to ask her a question. I am going to speak in a few minutes on the same subject and I will have an opportunity to explain my viewpoint.

I do in fact believe that the official opposition is playing its role properly in submitting to the House this type of motion, which, and I will explain this point further in a few minutes, affords us a look at the rather questionable side of government management in terms of its attitude toward international trade.

• (1245)

It is on this remark that I would like my colleague to expound her viewpoint. Now that international trade and international agreements have come into their own, should we promote trade to the detriment of human rights? I know her point of view, but I would like her to elaborate a bit on it.

If this is not the case, how do we reconcile international trade and human rights?

Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. It is a whole societal issue the member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead is raising. How do we choose between the economy, which is vital to our societies, and human rights, which every individual is entitled to enjoy.

The choice requires consideration. There is one basic point: when a human being is not respected he loses his humanity bit by bit. It is true that work is important. It is true that people have to eat. It is true that people should have whatever they need. It is true among our societies and it is true in developing countries where human rights must fight an uphill battle.

The question has to be asked: Which is more important? Is it more important to retain what sets human beings apart—their pride

and their role in society—or to destroy it little by little by giving them consumer goods and nothing more?

I know it is not easy. I know it is easier in opposition to criticize, but I also know that difficult problems require shared solutions. I therefore ask the Canadian government to lend an attentive ear, open to suggestions from this side of the House. Just because it comes from here does not mean it is useless or empty.

I think this is the discussion before us at the start of the third millennium and I sincerely believe Canada will have to be a leader in the area of human rights.

[*English*]

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my great pleasure to join in the debate on this very important subject. I would like to again thank the hon. member for Ahuntsic for bringing this issue forward and to thank my colleagues on this side of the House who participated in the discussions. They will be participating again this afternoon.

On March 20 I informed the House that I intended to present again the motion which I presented last year. The letter was dated March 20, 1996 but I have not received an official reply on the wording of the resolution.

However, last year when I presented my motion, I consulted many members of Parliament, including the hon. member who presented the motion today. I was hoping that I would receive the same courtesy, that he would consult me and the communities involved so that we could have a non-partisan motion which could be supported by all parties. I am very disappointed that the hon. member played a cheap trick at the last moment at nine o'clock on Sunday night when he announced his intention to put this motion.

Had I been informed a week earlier we would have participated and made a truly respectable motion of which everyone in Canada could be proud.

● (1250)

I hope the House will do it again next year. All three parties can come together because this is a non-partisan issue. This is not an issue for the Bloc Quebecois, Reform, NDP or the Liberals. This is an issue that affects each and every human being in this land. I would venture to say it involves every human being on this globe.

I wish to take a moment to read a letter from the Prime Minister addressed to the Canadian-Armenian community last weekend. It states:

> I am honoured to extend my greetings and sincere best wishes to the members of Canada's Armenian community as they mark the 81st anniversary of the Armenian tragedy in 1915.
>
> The government and the people of Canada deplore the death of a great number of Armenians as a result of the war which brought about an end to the Ottoman Empire, and we extend our sympathy to the Armenian community.
>
> Canada has been immeasurably enriched by many displaced Armenians who came to our shores, and by the contribution their descendants have made since. It is my profound hope that the memories of the past will serve to remind us all of the importance of tolerance and respect for diversity, and the historic attachment of these principles that has made Canada a beacon of hope for people the world over.
>
> Please accept my best wishes on this solemn occasion.

I would also like to share with the House part of the message sent by Senator Dole, the U.S. presidential candidate in the upcoming November election. The message is dated April 22 and reads as follows:

> Though April 24 is the day singled out to mark this tragedy, during the Genocide of 1915 some 1.5 million Armenians were subjected to a systematic extermination through a policy of deportation, torture, starvation and massacre. I join with the Armenian-American community in mourning the dead and recalling the suffering and sacrifice of the victims.

This issue is extremely important, especially to Canadians of Armenian origin. After all, they were one of the minorities that suffered in 1915 along with Kurds, Arabs, Greeks, Cypriots and many nationalities that were subjects of the Ottoman Empire at the time.

Since then, as the expression goes, crime not condemned is crime encouraged. Since then many crimes took place starting with the holocaust, Cyprus, Burundi, Cambodia, South Africa, Rwanda. It is important that we designate a week to commemorate all these crimes against humanity.

I am sure that each and every member of this House shares this concern. The question is how to do it so that it best for everybody. That is where the opposition lacks. As I said earlier, that was not a very nice thing to do because they made it as a partisan issue rather than a humanitarian, human rights issue.

What should be done? Individual members of Parliament could write letters to the Turkish government's representative here in Ottawa or they could ask Turkey to recognize the genocide, over and above what other countries will be doing hopefully in the next few years, and saying that crimes of genocide do not pay. Turkey has to admit its mistakes, like Germany has done, and start negotiations with the republic of Armenia to solve this problem. If there is restitution to be paid, I am sure it will have to pay so it can address the issue that will help us to overcome the difficulties we are facing today.

Speaking of Nazi crimes at Nuremberg, American Judge Robert Jackson said: ''These crimes'', referring to the holocaust, ''are unacceptable''. One of the reasons why he said they were unacceptable was not because of the number of victims but rather people came together to plot the extermination of a nation.

That is exactly what happened in 1915. The cabinet made a decision to slaughter each and every Armenian living in that Ottoman Empire. The pretext was the first world war. What a fantastic excuse. Everybody had an excuse during the war to kill and eliminate any minority. Armenian subjects were drafted into

the army. They were sent forward to fight the allies and they were shot in the back.

● (1255)

On the other hand Armenians joined the allied forces. They were called little allies. They hoped that when they did their job with the allies to defeat the central powers, which they had, Armenia would become an independent country. Fortunately Armenia became independent in 1918 but Armenian independence was short lived because of international politics.

At that time the western powers played politics with the fundamental issue of human rights. I come back again to my friends in opposition, do not play politics with these kinds of issues. It backfires on everybody and hurts everybody.

I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Saint-Denis. In conclusion, I want to repeat what I said last time when I presented motion 282. When speaking of my visit to Der-zor I said the following:

> Even today when one who goes there and puts his hand in the sand, one has to go down only six inches to pick up bones and the remains of human beings. The river running through Der-zor is a very historical scene to Canadians of Armenian origin and many other Armenians throughout the world because we saw pictures of bodies in that river in the same way we saw pictures of bodies floating last year in Rwanda. I saw that river, I walked in that river and I remember the past, 1915.

I conclude my comments with the these words. Unless we learn from the past we are condemned to repeat it. I hope we are united in this House to condemn the past so we do not repeat the slaughter, discrimination and genocide.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Daviault (Ahuntsic, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will leave aside any partisan consideration and remind the House of the good work done in the past by the member on behalf of his community; I would like to ask him a very simple question.

I know that, irrespective of our own position, we have to toe the party line; however, he has always been a fervent advocate for his community.

He mentioned on several occasions in his speech that stakeholders in other countries and other members have used the word genocide. The motion brought forward this morning specifically mentioned the word genocide to describe the 1915 events. The government's amendment talks about tragedy, whereas the subamendment proposed by the Reform Party re-introduce the word genocide.

I humbly ask the member whether the word genocide should be used in connection with the tragic events which occurred in 1915?

[*English*]

Mr. Assadourian: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech, it would have been preferable if the hon. member had phoned me. I was not happy with the involvement on this issue especially.

If he have phoned me we could have formulated a policy or draft that is acceptable to everyone. I regret he did not do that. That is why we are in the situation we are in now, not because of government policy but because of the way the Bloc Quebecois played the game and presented this motion. It would have been fantastic if the Bloc Quebecois members, the Reform Party members and us got together. That is something that would have been acceptable to everybody. That is what we want to do. That is what I did last year. That is what I intend to do with my motion this year. But I regret to say that was not the case.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to start by congratulating the representatives of the Armenian community and all the Armenian Canadians with whom I have had the pleasure to work for years and whom I am pleased to represent today in the House of Commons, at least in part.

● (1300)

I would also like to congratulate my colleague for Don Valley North, who is a member of this community and of the Liberal government, for his continuous and exceptional work on this issue. Like him, I deplore the fact that a Bloc member has played on the feelings of a community by announcing the tabling of this motion before it was brought forward in the House.

The 20th century has seen two world wars and numerous historical conflicts. In spite of this, crimes against humanity are not a thing of the past but continue to be daily occurrences in too many countries, countries which routinely practice torture, slavery, and the massive deportation of their civilian population. Everyday, we are witnessing the persecution of minorities on the basis of their opinion, race or religion.

[*English*]

To this day, these unacceptable acts of inhumanity continue despite the fact that the Geneva convention condemns such actions. Even though the international community has admitted that these acts should not be practised, we are still a long way from achieving this goal.

The Nuremberg war crimes tribunal for the first time tried those guilty of committing crimes against humanity. These crimes were

defined in article 6 of the London charter and included murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population before or during the war, or persecution on political, racial and religious grounds.

While not all the criminals have been tried, the international community recognizes the holocaust and commemorates it every year so that everyone around the world will remember this tragedy to ensure that it will never occur again. Regardless of this, we still live in a world where ethnic cleansing is practised, the most recent example being the horrors that were committed in the former Yugoslavia.

Can we continue to be an active member of the international community and allow these atrocities to continue? I think not. However, we must first be able to internationally acknowledge that atrocities against humanity are unacceptable.

The Armenian genocide which took place during the first world war is perhaps the most vivid example of genocide as an instrument of national policy by the Ottoman Turks. What makes the Armenian genocide such a particular example is that unlike the genocide of the Jewish people which took place during the second world war, the international community did not try the war criminals or even formally acknowledge that this massacre took place.

Why, people may ask, is it so important to recognize an event that occurred over 80 years ago? We must always remember that those who disregard history are condemned to repeat it. Just think if the international community had reacted to this as it should have at the time. Would the atrocities of the second world war ever have taken place? Perhaps not.

There is nothing we can do to bring back these victims or to change the past, but there is a need to designate a week of the year, as my colleague from Don Valley proposed last April, as a week of remembrance of the inhumanity of people toward one another to ensure that future generations do not forget these tragic events and more important, do not repeat them.

While the European community and several other countries such as Italy, France, Israel and most recently Russia have passed parliamentary decrees formally recognizing this event, the international community as a whole has not taken the steps necessary to condemn these horrible acts of inhumanity.

I repeat, our government has recognized this tragic incident that saw 1.5 million people brutally executed by the Ottoman Turks who sought to ethnically cleanse their land of foreigners. We understand the suffering that this brought and the need for the Armenian community to have this tragedy recognized by all members of the international community. That is why we are supporting a week to commemorate crimes against humanity.

[*Translation*]

As representatives of a country recognized for its support of human rights, we know that Canadians condemn the practice of genocide and the use of violence as an instrument of power. Failure to acknowledge that such actions took place would amount to supporting their use as an instrument of national policy.

The sad reality is that news reports are still dominated by the horrors resulting from a lack of respect for human rights.

[*English*]

While these atrocities are some examples of crimes committed against humanity, there are unfortunately many others, both past and present. Some are well known; others, such as the Asia Minor catastrophe of 1922, are not so well known.

• (1305)

[*Translation*]

At the end of the first world war, close to two million Greeks were living in a region of Asia Minor on the west coast of modern Turkey. Greeks had been living in that region for over 3,000 years. In 1922, these people, like the Armenians and other Turkish minorities, were the victims of the first ethnic cleansing operation of the 20th century.

During that tragic summer, 600,000 Greeks from Asia Minor were killed by the forces of Mustafa Kemal, the father of modern Turkey. One and a half million people were also forced to leave their ancestral homes and ended up in Greece as refugees. These operations were neither sporadic nor spontaneous, but rather in line with the new Turkish state's cold and calculated ethnic cleansing policy. During this series of well-organized massacres, the government also burned down churches, schools, even cities and towns with Greek ties.

Although foreign diplomats and correspondents, as well as thousands of people from all kinds of backgrounds, witnessed these atrocities, the international community did nothing to condemn them.

[*English*]

Although the United States, Britain, France and Italy had ships and troops stationed on the coast of Asia Minor, they refused to intervene. The failure of these countries to condemn the actions of the Turkish government at that time encouraged other states to practise genocide as a government policy.

Unchecked aggression only leads to further acts of barbarism and genocide. In the last four years alone we have witnessed the

cataclysm that has befallen the former Yugoslavia. All the warring factions are guilty of mass killings, ethnic cleansing and cultural genocide in varying degrees. The war crimes tribunal of which Canada is a representative as one of the judges is presently examining the evidence before it. It will no doubt bring out the sad and tragic reality of what took place in the former Yugoslavia.

The cycle of violence has not stopped. We only need to look to the mass murders that have taken place in Somalia, Rwanda and Cambodia to confirm that fact. In all these examples the killing, destruction and forcible movement of populations have been acts of deliberate policy and not random excesses of rebels or uncontrolled government forces. Many governments have shut their eyes and not acknowledged that these atrocities took place.

[*Translation*]

By recognizing these historic events as crimes against humanity, we affirm that such crimes, both past and present, cannot be tolerated. As members of Parliament, we must urge the international community to redouble its efforts to prevent crimes against humanity.

[*English*]

Canada will continue to take a leadership role on the world stage to promote peace among the members of the international community. We have no lessons to be learned from the official opposition. As we all know, its mandate is to break up this country which is so respected on an international level. Our reputation for the respect and promotion of human rights precedes us and can no doubt help us to achieve this goal.

What I am about to say may be taken as partisan but we have no lessons to be learned from the opposition. As my colleague from Don Valley said, talk is cheap. The opposition can present a motion, it can say anything it wants, but its words do not have the same consequences.

A government like ours which has shown it is a responsible government at all levels acts responsibly. There are legal and international consequences for words as well as for actions. We have no lessons to learn from the hon. members on the other side of the House. During the recent referendum in Quebec we know what high regard they had for the ethnic communities there. I have lived in Quebec, I was raised in Quebec, I have spent many years fighting many of the words of discrimination and racism that exist in that society. We have no lessons to be learned.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, if you were to seek it, I believe you would find unanimous consent that the votes which had previously been deferred to 5.30 p.m. today be further deferred until the end of Government Orders.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

• (1310)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speech of the hon. member for Saint-Denis. I must tell her that the Government of Quebec fully respect the rights of minorities. Quebec is a very open society. I can testify to that, as a non-francophone member who was elected by a majority of French speaking constituents and by members of ethnic communities.

The hon. member calls the Armenian genocide a tragic incident. It is much more than a tragic incident. It is the extermination of one and a half million Armenians. It is the deportation of half a million people. It is the destruction of numerous churches and monasteries. It is the dispersal of Armenians all over the world.

I am surprised that the Government of Canada stubbornly refuses to recognize this genocide which has been recognized by other nations, including Latin American countries such as Uruguay and Argentina. Monuments were erected in Columbia, etc. It is unacceptable on the part of a government promoting democracy and human rights throughout the world to hold such contradictory views. Indeed, when trade comes into play, it takes precedence over human rights.

How can the hon. member justify the Canadian government's stubborn refusal to recognize this genocide for what it is?

Mrs. Bakopanos: Madam Speaker, let me read again, for the benefit of the opposition member, the amendment that we tabled in this House regarding the motion before us. It says: ''the Armenian tragedy which claimed some 1.5 million lives''. There was never any question of not recognizing this massacre. This government never said that it did not recognize this tragedy.

As to whether the province of Quebec lives in democracy, I remind the opposition member that Canada is known as the most democratic, tolerant and open country in the world.

If we currently have in the House of Commons the opposition that we know, it is because we recognize and accept our differences. We are known as a government that fights for human rights everywhere in the world. Our government has always tried to protect those in the world who could not protect themselves. Again, we always recognized that 1.5 million Armenians lost their lives.

[*English*]

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was very pleased with the speech by the hon. member for Saint-Denis. Many Canadians of Armenian origin live in the Saint-Denis riding.

In 1939 when Adolf Hitler was invading Europe and slaughtering the Jews country by country, someone asked him how future generations would react to the holocaust, the massacre and genocide that he had committed. His reply was: ''After all, who remembers the Armenian atrocities, the Armenian genocide?''

If the world were to condemn the Armenian genocide would the hon. member agree with me that it would have prevented the invasion by Turkish forces in northern Cyprus some 67 years afterward?

Mrs. Bakopanos: Madam Speaker, as I said in my speech, we must never forget history. If we forget history and we do not acknowledge the atrocities of the past, we are condemned to repeat them. Yes, I do believe that what happened in Cyprus may not have happened if there had been acknowledgement of this tragedy that occurred.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in this debate on the opposition motion put forward by my hon. colleague from Ahuntsic.

• (1315)

Today's motion is exactly the same as the motion the hon. member for Don Valley North moved in 1994. I was somewhat surprised to hear our colleague from Don Valley North and the hon. member for Saint-Denis accuse the opposition of narrow partisanship because we put this motion before the House today.

As I said earlier, the text of the resolution moved by the Bloc member for Ahuntsic is, for the most part, the same as the motion the hon. member for Don Valley North put forward last year. Following pressure exerted by his own party, the motion was not voted on in the House. It was announced that the motion could not be voted on in 1994.

The official opposition wanted to revisit this issue in the House because of its significance, and also because of the lack of attention the government pays to human rights when it deals with international trade. As the official opposition critic on human rights, I wanted to take part in this debate precisely to address this issue.

Of course, we have to go beyond narrow partisanship—and I mention it mostly for our Liberal colleagues—and decry these actions which are still occurring too often nowadays, actions aimed at completely wiping out a people. That is why I am a bit surprised by the reaction of the hon. member for Don Valley North. It seems to me that no one can deny the serious harm done to certain peoples, among others the Armenian people. Therefore, we have to denounce such actions without any reservation and with no hesitation whatsoever so that, hopefully, they do not reoccur.

As an example of partisanship, let me remind the House of the amendment moved by the Secretary of State responsible for Multiculturalism and the Status of Women, to replace the word ''genocide'' by ''tragedy''. As we have noticed in the speeches made by the Liberal members and as we will see, I guess, throughout the day, where Armenia is concerned, Liberal members prefer to talk about a tragedy instead of a genocide.

I do not think these two words are interchangeable. The newspaper I was reading this morning, and almost all the daily papers in Quebec, reported many car accidents, as they do unfortunately every day or at least every week. I read this morning in the paper about an automobile accident that happened in the region next to mine, the Montérégie, where three young people died. The report spoke of a tragedy for the families, relatives and friends.

Last week, on April 18, we were reminded the world over of the Oklahoma City tragedy where almost 200 persons died last year in an explosion due to a truly insane action. This was called a tragedy.

• (1320)

In spite of their seriousness or their enormity, can events like automobile accidents and the terrible Oklahoma City bombing really be compared with not only the intent but also the actions taken to eliminate a people, a whole community? Is it really possible?

According to the *Larousse* Dictionary, a tragedy can mean two things. I think words must have a meaning. It is said that the legislator never talks for the sake of talking. Thus, since the Secretary of State responsible for Multiculturalism and the Status of Women moved in this House on behalf of the government an amendment to replace the term ''genocide'' by the term ''tragedy'', there must be a reason. This was not done merely to stretch out the opposition's motion. There was an intention.

What exactly does ''tragedy'' mean? What is the meaning of ''tragedy'' in the *Larousse* dictionary? The meaning given in the *Petit Robert* is almost the same. In the literary sense it means a play, the subject of which is generally drawn from legend or history, which takes well known figures and has them act out events designed to evoke fear or pity—

Is that the intention of the government, which is accusing the official opposition of partisan politics, of wanting to raise this question without giving the government sufficient warning, according to the member for Don Valley North?

I think that by using the word ''tragedy'', they are specifically seeking to mask the real situation, whereas ''genocide'' refers to the extermination of a people. It is not the same thing. I repeat, the words must have a meaning.

In his motion, which he repeated this morning, the member for Don Valley North used the term or expression ''crime against humanity''. A crime against humanity is always a tragedy, but it is different. It is different when that term, which is similar to genocide, is used, it is different than the use of the term ''tragedy'', which, in its literary sense, refers to theatre intended to move audiences, but which also refers to an unfortunate event or events.

We have to know why. All we can do is interpret—I do not know if I can speak about interpretation—conclude that the intention of the government is to qualify, to reduce the scope of what happened to the Armenians early in this century.

Can one compare—I return to my example—the extermination of a million and a half people, the deportation of 500,000 others, the fact that in Armenia over 2,000 churches and 200 convents were destroyed, that people were targeted specifically because of their race or religious beliefs, is this House, the Parliament of Canada, which is a world leader in respecting human rights and democracy, being asked simply to consider these events a tragedy? This makes no sense.

We have a duty, and I must conclude that the government's intention in introducing this amendment is to water down the interpretation of history as it relates to the Armenian genocide, and also to other similar situations.

• (1325)

My colleagues raised the problem, and we will have to come back to it during the day, of how the Canadian government had no problem talking about the genocide in Rwanda and how it is so difficult to recognize the genocide of the Armenians.

The member's motion also raises the matter of the government's attitude, which will be the focus of my remarks: the government's attitude toward human rights, which are a bargaining point, if I can put it that way, in trade matters between Canada and other countries.

As my colleague for Ahuntsic pointed out, the fact that the Government of Canada has been negotiating various levels of trade with the Government of Turkey for a number of years already, including the potential sale of a Candu reactor, there may in fact be a certain amount of interest in pushing the Armenian issue under the carpet. I hope I am wrong in making this suggestion.

After this government's election, we concluded from a number of decisions made that trade was more important than human rights. I would remind this House about the trip by Team Canada, in fact the two trips by Team Canada, especially to Asia where the Prime Minister stressed the enormous advantages offered by Canada and worked to improve trade with Asian countries.

Everyone in Canada—the official opposition along with the rest of the parties—is agreed on the importance of improving our record in terms of developing the economy. Everyone agrees that Canada should be competitive, that our products should be promoted—but at any price? Should we do so at the expense of our most basic principles, particularly in the area of human rights? The answer, obviously, is no, and this is the answer the official opposition wants to hear from the government. We want a categoric and strong no, not only in this House, but outside it as well.

When government officials, with the Prime Minister at the helm, travel the world, they should carry a clear message. Yes, Canada is open to international trade, yes, Canada wants to reduce, indeed eliminate as much as possible barriers to international trade. However, at the same time, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and all government members have the responsibility and the duty to make it clear that human rights are not negotiable.

In conclusion, I want to remind my colleagues in this House, in particular government members, that a 13-year old boy, the young Kielburger, from the Toronto area, had to confront the Prime Minister on this issue for it to be given attention all of a sudden.

• (1330)

This young boy had to denounce child labour, especially in Asian countries, in order for the government to, all of a sudden, pay attention to the issue of human rights.

I know my time is up. However, I want to say in conclusion that as parliamentarians, we do not have the right to use terms such as tragedy to minimize the importance of events that occurred throughout the world, especially in Armenia. When we talk about genocide, genocide it is. When we talk about child labour, that is what me must call it. Words must have a meaning. This is what I want and this is what the official opposition wants by having this motion passed.

[*English*]

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, for the third time in the last two hours I am asking an hon. member from the Bloc Quebecois to put his money where his mouth is. Would he undertake to the House to go to his caucus, pass a resolution and ask the premier of Quebec, the former leader of the Bloc Quebecois, to erect a monument in Montreal or in Quebec City to commemorate the genocide of the Armenians in 1915, yes or no?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Madam Speaker, to start with, I will remind the member for Don Valley North that Quebec recognized the Armenian genocide in 1980, that my colleague for Ahuntsic met, I believe, the expectations of the member for Don Valley North since the municipal government in Montreal, headed by its mayor, had planned to erect a monument to commemorate the Armenian genocide, but that, during the election campaign, yielding to pressures from the Minister of

International Trade, the City of Montreal changed its mind. The mayor of Montreal has yet to deny that his project was put on the back burner following pressures from a member of the government.

If I understand what the member for Don Valley North said, and if he is talking on behalf of his caucus and his government, I am convinced that the City of Montreal—and I do not see why the Quebec government would object to being associated with this initiative—would be quite willing to commemorate the Armenian genocide, and to remind our fellow citizens and the world at large of it by erecting a monument. I cannot see any inconsistency in what we are saying, since we are in favour of recognizing it. Not only are we in favour of doing it, but we do recognize the Armenian genocide. For our part, we do not want to reduce these unfortunate events to one human tragedy among many others, rather we want to stress that it is unacceptable for any government to intentionally and systematically try to eliminate a whole people.

In his speech, not in his questions, the member for Don Valley North mentioned the holocaust on several occasions. The word holocaust is associated with the extermination of Jews during the second world war. We are talking about the extermination of a people. The official opposition is not being inconsistent, we recognize the Armenian genocide, this is the subject of the motion. We condemn this kind of crime against humanity and, of course, I believe the official opposition, and the Quebec government, would not object in any way to this being commemorated in a special way by erecting a monument.

• (1335)

[*English*]

Mr. Assadourian: Madam Speaking, I asked a simple question. I did not want to be lectured. Would the member agree to put a monument in Quebec City, yes or no? All he has to say is yes, he agrees or no, he does not agree. That is all I want. I do not want to be lectured.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Madam Speaker, I do not know if the hon. member for Don Valley North is looking for financing but, if he is, we would like to join him in asking the government to proceed.

I just mentioned that if there were inconsistencies among parliamentarians, they were on the other side, which tries to reduce the importance of these events by referring to them as a tragedy, when we are talking about the extermination of a people.

This is my answer, and if that does not suit the hon. member he could repeat his question.

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to make a brief comment and compare what the president of Amnesty International said to what the Prime Minister said. I will then ask my colleague for some comments.

During a recent visit to Ottawa, Pierre Sané, president of Amnesty International, said: ''The battle for human rights has to be global, otherwise it will be lost even before it starts''.

During his first trip to Asia, the Prime Minister said: ''I could give a headline-making speech on that issue, but I prefer to open markets and promote trade. The walls will eventually come down''.

Given what the Prime Minister said, could my colleague tell us when these walls will come down? Is it in two years or two hundred years?

Mr. Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Madam Speaker, the question of my colleague from Louis-Hébert is very relevant. As a matter of fact, I pointed out at the beginning of my speech the kind of political jockeying the government is doing by putting on the table—and the reference to the Prime Minister's words is totally eloquent—human rights and international trade. That is not only unacceptable, and the term is not too strong, but totally repugnant.

Like my colleague from Louis-Hébert just did, I would remind the House that despite all the things we can blame on the previous government, the Conservative government of Mr. Mulroney, parliamentarians of this House and observers of the political scene in general will recognize that Mr. Mulroney did not miss an opportunity to denounce the way various communities throughout the world were treated and to promote human rights. I remind the House that it was a Conservative government, therefore theoretically more right wing, if you will.

We now see a government calling itself liberal in terms of its political allegiance, but in reality, its decisions are even more typical of the extreme right. When my colleague from Louis-Hébert reminded us of the Prime Minister's words, as I was saying earlier, that is the message people throughout the world remember in terms of Canada's political stand as regards human rights.

If that message is heard around the world, it will surely be heard and understood by many people and groups here in Canada, a situation that threatens the future of our rights and freedoms if we are not careful.

Not only it is justified, but the official opposition would be derelict in its duty if it failed to raise this kind of debate in the House. That is why we have tabled this motion today. We want all members of this House who speak up in support of human rights to have the opportunity to ask the government, by voting on this motion, to be consistent and to promote these rights at the international level.

● (1340)

Mr. Lincoln: May I ask a question?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): I am sorry, but the period for questions and comments is over.

[*English*]

Mr. Peterson: Madam Speaker, I would be pleased to give a couple of minutes of my time to the hon. member to ask questions if he wishes, if it is possible with the consent of the House.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): We must now resume debate. After your speech, the House will have ten minutes for questions and comments. Resuming debate. The hon. member has the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak on this motion and I commend the Bloc member for Ahuntsic who brought forward the motion to recognize the Armenian genocide of 1915.

I put on record that our party supports the motion that the House recognize, on the occasion of the 81st anniversary of the Armenian tragedy which claimed some 1.5 million lives on April 24, 1915, and in recognition of other crimes against humanity, the week of April 20 to 27 of each year as the week of remembrance of the inhumanity of people toward one another.

On Sunday I had the honour to participate in a ceremony at the Armenian community centre in Toronto. For two and a half hours we remembered the genocide of 1915. What impressed me most about the ceremony was that so many young people, through song, attendance, speeches and leadership, remembered what took place 81 years ago. It had become part of their lives and part of their culture that the genocide must never be forgotten.

This is not the first time I have participated in this type of ceremony. I have been privileged for a number of years as a member of Parliament to have met with my friends at the Armenian community centre.

When I was first introduced to the issue by the member for Don Valley North it was unknown to me. At that time he was the executive director of the community centre. He and other members of the community, including Aris Barbikian who has come from Toronto to be with us in the House today, talked to me about that incredible tragedy in which 1.5 million Armenians were indiscriminately wiped out simply because they were Armenians. This tragedy has been part the psyche of Armenians everywhere in the world.

After 81 years, we ask, why could people not forget? The answer is very simple. The Turkish government has never recognized its responsibility in this act of genocide. How can the survivors of that tragedy or the families or friends of survivors accept this historical canard where it has never been recognized by the perpetrators? Even the holocaust of the second world war has been recognized for what it was.

● (1345)

When we as individuals can accept and deal head on with the truth as opposed to putting our heads in the sand, then we can cope with whatever the world has thrown or may throw at us in the future. However it is denial which is an insult to those who were wiped out 81 years ago.

I am not particularly proud of the rest of the world. We have been slow in coming to grips with recognizing what actually took place. The historical record is clear. There is no room for ambiguity or ambivalence. That tragedy did take place. That genocide is a fact of history. Whatever we say about it cannot change that incontrovertible fact.

Why are we so reluctant to join with our brothers and sisters in the Armenian community in recognizing what is a plain and simple truth? Perhaps it is part of that world of realpolitik or doublespeak. Maybe we have other reasons which we do not want to talk about. I find it offensive.

As a member of Parliament I have spoken publicly calling for recognition of the Armenian genocide. It may not be in the cards today or in the exact words that we would like to see. However, I will be supporting the motion as amended by our party which puts in stark outline the fact that so many people were murdered and that it was a tragedy of enormous proportion. There is still suffering by those who remember. Perhaps one day we will find a way in the House to recognize, as a few other nations already have, the fact that the 1915 murder of 1.5 million Armenians was in fact the first genocide of the 20th century.

Why is it important that we dwell on an event which took place 81 years ago? I recall the words of Hitler who, when he was embarking on his crusade to wipe out Jewry in the world, said: ''Who is to stop me? Who remembers the Armenian genocide?'' That is one reason we must remember. If we cannot look history straight in the eye, if we cannot learn from the tragedies which took place, how apt are we to stand idly by and ignore other acts of genocide which are taking place?

We have seen the tragedy in Bosnia where people were wiped out simply because they belonged to a particular race or religion. We have seen the killing fields. We have seen wars throughout the entire world based on the fact that people because they were of a particular nationality, religion or race were considered to be inferior and our enemy. That is so against what every member in the House from every party stands for.

● (1350)

Not only in Canada do we have a human rights code but we also have a charter of rights that deals with discrimination based on race, colour, religion, creed, sex and age and is totally beyond the purview of any legislature and cannot be countered. We have spoken about the types of human rights we seek to respect within our own nation. We are the signatories to numerous documents and treaties which impose this obligation to recognize rights internationally.

Looking at the situation in Turkey today, we see a war led by the PKK, the Kurdish workers party, to try to create a separate state. What we have seen in terms of repression by the Turkish government has been extreme. It is also a matter of record that there have been many violations of human rights in Turkey.

Canada has condemned these violations quite properly, as it is our obligation to do as a member of the world community. We have called for a political solution rather than a military solution to the separatist issue. We hope that by working with our allies and the Turkish officials we are going to be able to achieve some progress in this regard.

My mind goes back to a couple of days ago at the wonderful ceremony of remembrance, the 81st anniversary of the Armenian genocide. I was joined at the commemorative service by the member for Don Valley North, the member for Scarborough and Senator Haidasz. All of us were impressed by the intensity of feeling we experienced during that ceremony.

I mentioned earlier the fact that so many young people had made the non-recognition of the genocide a part of their ethos, a part of their mission. These young people are not going to be content until the record is set straight. These people are not seeking reparations or international trials. All they want is a recognition of what their people went through, a recognition that this tragedy took place and that the rest of the world is prepared to join with them in solidarity in recognizing those who died, those who survived and their families.

The motion we see before us as amended by our party is a step in the right direction. It may not be all that we seek but it does not mean that we will give up our efforts to seek more. I commend the member for Don Valley North for the efforts he has made and all members of the House who support this motion.

● (1355)

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I take the comments of the member for Willowdale at face value and acknowledge the fact that his comments were heartfelt and genuine as all of the comments in the House have been.

However, there does seem to be some inconsistency here. The Bloc, and prior to that, the Parti Quebecois, has been diligent in facing this issue and trying to bring some recognition to the Armenian genocide since at least 1980. The Government of Quebec and the Government of Ontario both in the early eighties unanimously presented resolutions to that effect. Yet, when the issue comes to the federal government it seems to be watered down. Such is the case again today with the removal of the word genocide by the Liberal amendment. I understand that is to make it palatable today particularly to Turkey with whom we have good and mutually beneficial relations.

Could the member for Willowdale expand on the fact that we have to rob Peter to pay Paul?

Mr. Peterson: Mr. Speaker, I cannot respond in a way that is satisfactory to the member or perhaps to any member in this House including myself.

I believe we should take the steps, hopefully in time, to call a spade a spade and a genocide a genocide. Unfortunately governments often move more slowly than we would like, more slowly than reason or feelings would dictate. We cannot always achieve everything we want exactly when we want. I suppose this has been one of the great revelations to me having spent several years in this House. Not only was Rome not built in a day, it was not repaired in a day.

We will measure our progress in this area in terms of steps rather than quantum leaps. It may not be as satisfactory. There may not be explanations which are totally acceptable and square with what we know to be the historic reality. Nevertheless, considering our international obligations, considering our allies, considering international pressures that are brought to bear—

The Speaker: Colleagues, it being 2 p.m., we will proceed to Statements by Members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during current times Canadians from all over Canada must never lose sight of the fact that in the years leading up to 1867 the Fathers of Confederation laid the foundation for our Canada with the full intent that the country was to be indivisible and indissoluble. There has never been any change in that intent nor in that purpose. Neither in the Constitution of Canada nor in law is there any provision for the separation or splitting away of a province or territory.

We as Canadians have a moral and civic obligation to maintain the territorial integrity of our country. Let us never sway from our firm conviction toward Canadian nationhood. Let us resolve as a Canadian family to continue to protect each other's culture, language and religion so that Canada will forever be a national dream in the eyes of an envious world.

* * *

TSWWASSEN SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT

Mr. John Cummins (Delta, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, there is a legal requirement that the sewage treatment facility being constructed by the Tswwassen Indian Band be subject to an environmental assessment pursuant to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

The government has refused to confirm such an assessment. This plant is being built on vitally sensitive intertidal salt water marsh. The marsh has been internationally recognized as an extremely sensitive habitat for juvenile salmon, migratory wildlife and the great blue heron, a species unique to this ecosystem.

In spite of enormous pressure from the public, the province of British Columbia and the municipality of Delta, these ministers of the government are apparently denying the people of the country access to their own environmental laws.

I beg the House to join in my demand that the Government of Canada immediately confirm that it has commenced and environmental assessment of this sewage project pursuant to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. There must be one law in this land and it must apply to each of us.

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[*Translation*]

INVENTION AND INNOVATION

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I gives me great pleasure to draw the attention of the House to the third Salon de l'invention et de l'innovation, to be held shortly in Black Lake. This is a fair where inventors display for the general public the new products they have invented.

This fair, which is very interesting for business people and the general public, is a good opportunity to develop new businesses and create jobs.

I want to emphasize the excellent work of those who have organized this event: Benoît Côté, Éric Labonté, Mario Bergeron, Sonia Delisle et Marcel St-Laurent. I also want to congratulate all the volunteers involved in this event.

As honourary president, I personally extend a general invitation to come to the Black Lake fair this weekend, April 26, 27, and 28.

[*English*]

TRAINING

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the proposed plans to privatize training under changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act and to implement a voucher system have devastating consequences not only for recipients but for educational institutions and for long term educational planning.

This proposal is based on two very dubious assumptions: that every region has a mix of private and public training facilities, and that all applicants can on their own easily access training options.

In many rural and northern areas this is simply not the case. For example, the Yukon College under this scheme would lose $2 million to $3 million a year in stable and assured funding, funding which allows the college to plan ahead for both UI recipients and the general public. Under the government proposal both groups will be the losers.

I urge the minister to review this ill advised change, which clearly undermines training in the north and in rural areas.

* * *

FLOODING

Mr. Reg Alcock (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, run-off from record winter snow levels and ice jams on the Red and surrounding rivers are causing severe flooding in many Manitoba communities.

St. Andrews, Montaclam, Tache, Morris, St. Clements and North Norfolk have declared themselves to be in a state of emergency, and many more communities are on flood alert as the water continues to rise. The flooding has caused a great deal of damage already and is expected to continue for several more days until the rivers crest.

The good news is that thanks to the foresight of a number of public officials and the hard work of thousands of volunteers the damage has been kept to a minimum. Whole communities began preparing sandbags early prompted by the advice of the Emergency Preparedness Organization.

In my riding city councillor John Angus ran sandbagging workshops and trained volunteers so that when the high water arrived we were able to respond immediately. City and provincial officials made sure the necessary supplies were available.

Volunteers from St. Norbert, Dakota and Fort Richmond Collegiates and the St. Norbert Foundation spent countless hours filling sandbags and building dykes. Local restaurants, churches and service clubs donated food for the volunteers, drivers and helped with child care.

I thank all of the volunteers who have worked—

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[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL BOOK DAY

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate International Book Day. There could be no better time to pay tribute to all the Canadian writers who, over the years, have put Canadian literature in the enviable place it occupies internationally.

This is also the time to become aware of the importance of books and written materials in our everyday lives and to recognize the exceptional contribution of written communication to the history of humanity.

On the eve of the 21st century and the dawning of the high tech era, we must work even harder to preserve the incredible wealth that is written communication.

• (1405)

The generations after us, who will soon replace us, must know and appreciate the merits of reading. This is the reason why our government is so committed to literacy, education and training programs for our children and for Canadians in general.

* * *

[*English*]

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently I have had several complaints from my constituents in London—Middlesex about gasoline prices.

Many Canadians are very upset at what they perceive to be an orchestrated effort by gasoline companies to charge exorbitant amounts for gasoline at the pumps.

Canadian consumers feel they are being unfairly gouged by gasoline companies which routinely raise prices as weekends begin, especially long weekends. They feel these companies are displaying incredible arrogance and that they are both taking advantage of consumers and ignoring any attempt by governments in Canada to help resolve this concern. It is time for the gasoline companies of Canada to become better corporate citizens and to treat Canadian consumers more fairly.

I call on this government and governments at all levels to deliver this message on behalf of Canadians as forcefully as possible.

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ROTARIANS

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, as a Rotarian I am pleased to rise today and pay tribute to the largest and fastest growing service club in the world, Rotary.

As of this month membership totalled 1,187,509 Rotarians from 27,995 clubs in 154 countries around the globe. In Canada we have 29,183 members in 650 clubs. This year's Rotary international president, Herb Brown, has chosen as his theme: ''act with integrity, serve with love and work for peace''. In serving with love, Rotary has raised over $400 million toward the polio plus project, a project dedicated to the elimination of polio from the face of the earth.

Visiting today are 18 Rotarians from my home club in Barrie who are here on an exchange with the Ottawa West club. Many members of the House are Rotarians and I ask that they join with me in recognizing Rotarians for their work in communities right across Canada and indeed the world.

* * *

AUTO LEASING

Mr. Charles Hubbard (Miramichi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a major problem in the country today is the concentration of economic power in the boardrooms of major corporations whose sole business is to maximize profits.

We are lobbied today by banks, an industry that has made billions in profits while using automation to lay off thousands of employees to now enter the field of auto leasing.

It is important for our local car dealers that major banks not be permitted to enter the leasing markets. They believe it would be a conflict of interest, as banks are their major source of financing. They are concerned that they will jeopardize their chances of obtaining financing from the banks if they are forced to compete with the banks in the same market.

We cannot afford to have the banks take more jobs away from hardworking Canadians. I ask all members to support car dealers in their opposition to banks' entering the field of leasing.

* * *

FLOODING

Mr. Ron Fewchuk (Selkirk—Red River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the people of the Selkirk—Red River riding and to commend the valiant efforts of the volunteers of the community of St. Andrews, St. Clements and Selkirk.

These people worked through the weekend to hold back the worst flood in Manitoba history caused by the overflowing waters of the Assiniboine River and the Red River.

The surging water forced some 250 residents to flee their homes. The damage could have been far worse had the ice jam not broken, allowing the water to flow toward Lake Winnipeg. Unfortunately the Selkirk Marine Museum suffered extensive damage during the flood. In addition to damage to the boats, documents such as

original captains logs and 13,000 photos were destroyed in the museum building.

This is a sad loss for the people of Selkirk—Red River riding and for Canadian tourists across this great land of ours.

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[*Translation*]

PARTNERSHIP

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, most papers announced this morning that the members of the Parti Quebecois will soon be asked to vote on a change to their party's political agenda to formally include the notion of partnership.

Picking up again the highlights of the May 12 agreement, the Parti Quebecois would come back with its myth of partnership after separation. Perhaps the new leader of the PQ does not remember that, on October 30, a majority of Quebecers voted against this project.

When will separatists in Quebec accept to respect the democratically expressed will of their fellow citizens and give up this separation idea which is leading nowhere?

• (1410)

What Quebec needs is not a premier who perpetuates political and economical instability, but someone who would work to eliminate it.

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THE ARMENIAN PEOPLE

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, BQ): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the 81st anniversary of the Armenian genocide. This sad occasion commemorates the tragic end of more than one and a half million Armenians. The massacres of the Armenian people by the Ottoman government of Turkey, which lasted from 1915 to 1923, were the first genocide of the 20th century. It is important to condemn these atrocities and to increase public awareness of genocides committed throughout the world.

Any country that uses genocide and violence as an instrument of policy is guilty of a crime against humanity, a crime that will remain forever etched in the memory of those who suffered and that history can never forget.

The purpose of this day to remember the victims of the Armenian genocide is not only to remind us of the pain and suffering endured by the Armenian people, but also to assure us that such atrocities will not be repeated.

[*English*]

SPRINGTIME IN OTTAWA

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Well, folks, it is springtime in Ottawa. Recently the solicitor general sprang into action by apologizing and offering compensation to rioting prisoners.

The justice minister is helping Clifford Olson spring out of prison after August by allowing section 745 to stay as law.

The Prime Minister is springing from country to country because his absence keeps him out of trouble in Canada.

The finance minister is springing yet another fiscal trap by disguising the GST instead of scrapping it. Veteran Liberal MPs spring—no, they are bounced—out of the party for voting their conscience.

Yes, it is springtime in Ottawa all right, but fall is coming in the next federal election for the federal government.

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THE LATE CLARA SMALLWOOD

Mrs. Bonnie Hickey (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on April 14, Mrs. Clara Isabelle Smallwood, wife of the late Hon. Joseph R. Smallwood, premier of Newfoundland and Labrador from 1949 to 1972, passed away at the age of 94 at the Interfaith senior citizens home near Carbonear, Newfoundland.

Mrs. Smallwood witnessed some of the most crucial turning points in the history of Newfoundland. She saw the transition of politics from the commission of government in the early 1930s, ran from the Houses of the British Parliament in London, England, to the birth of the 10th province in Canada at midnight on March 31, 1949, an event that truly united our country from sea to sea.

She stood by her husband through six successful provincial elections and watched as the province made its mark in Canadian society as it brought with it unique heritage, culture and lifestyle which have not altered over generations.

Mrs. Smallwood will be missed by not only her large circle of family and friends but by all Newfoundlanders who remember the day we joined Canada and by future generations which, through history books, will learn of the indelible contribution made to this nation by the Smallwoods.

* * *

THE LATE CLARA SMALLWOOD

Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the late Joey Smallwood in his autobiography *I Chose Canada*

wrote: ''My marriage to Clara was one of the most fortunate events of my life. I do not know what I would have done without her''.

Clara Smallwood passed away last week. It had been my privilege over many years to observe the special chemistry between Clara and Joey Smallwood. Clara Smallwood avoided the limelight but still distinguished herself in many dignified ways. She was a marvellous human being, kind hearted to the core. She was a very talented musician, intelligent and well read. She was a great family woman who showered her three children, Ramsey, William and Clara, and her many grandchildren and great grandchildren as well as countless others with much affection.

Her support for her husband was unwavering, indeed legendary.

I salute her today for her wonderful contribution, behind the scenes but significant nevertheless, to Newfoundland and Labrador and to Canada.

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[*Translation*]

COPYRIGHTS

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ): Mr. Speaker, UNESCO has designated today as International Copyright Day.

The Bloc Quebecois wishes to take this opportunity to remind the Minister of Canadian Heritage that authors are eagerly awaiting phase II of the copyright legislation review.

• (1415)

Like them, we are ready to roll up our sleeves and work to better protect their rights, to obtain not just symbolic but real recognition of neighbouring rights, as well as royalties on data storage and recording devices.

We would be dismayed to see the minister use the legislative review process as an excuse to undermine copyrights by introducing a series of exemptions.

Copyrights allow originators to retain ownership of their work and to authorize its use. They must not be restricted but adapted to the technological realities.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance this morning announced that he had reached an agreement on the harmonization of the GST with the provincial sales tax.

Some hon. members: Hear, Hear.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, you will have noted that the Liberal members and ministers applauded the fact that the GST remains, but will be hidden in the future.

Will the Minister of Finance acknowledge that, in his admission to journalists this morning of having been wrong in thinking he could replace the GST with another tax, he was confirming that the GST will stay, but will be hidden in the future?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we announced this morning was a major reform in the Atlantic provinces. Now we really do have a tax that will eliminate overlap and duplication, and I am sure the member opposite will agree. The tax will be harmonized, as it is in Quebec.

As most consumers, small and medium businesses and retailers have asked, the tax will be visible in the purchase of a dress, for example, but it will be transparent at the same time, because the tax itself will appear on the bill.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, everyone, including his Liberal colleagues, will have seen that the minister is in no rush to comment on his own remarks to the effect that the GST will indeed remain in place.

Will the Minister of Finance confirm that the $1 billion or nearly that in compensation paid to the Maritime provinces to encourage them to go along with his system will mean that the rest of Canada will be paying about $1 billion of their taxes in compensation to the Maritimes for a sales tax they will no longer be paying because the provinces agreed to the minister's deal?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Not at all, Mr. Speaker. What we did was arrange a formula to compensate provinces wishing to harmonize their sales tax but facing a loss in revenues, that is, the four Atlantic provinces. The offer was made to Saskatchewan and Manitoba as well. Other provinces, like Quebec in 1990, suffered no loss. This is true as well for Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia.

It is in fact a well established practice in Canada, when a region undergoes a major restructuring or faces some hardship, as in the case of the payments to western farmers in the 1990s, for the federal government to provide assistance, because Canada is built on the principle of regions helping each other. This is in fact what we have done here.

• (1420)

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is not economic compensation for a problem created by the federal government; it is political compensation.

It is very easy to understand. If consumers in the Maritimes are asked to pay less sales tax in order to participate in the minister's proposal, and the federal government pays out $1 billion in compensation for this tax Maritimers will no longer have to pay, this is tantamount to saying to the people in the other provinces:

''Pay up $1 billion now, so the people in the Maritimes can pay less sales tax''. This is what everybody understood.

Will the Minister of Finance confirm that the government's propensity to centralize everything including the collection and management of the GST and sales tax will cost Quebecers some $250 million?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Not at all, Mr. Speaker. First, costs are being shared between the federal government and the governments of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland. In other words, the costs are shared more or less equally for four years. The adjustment payments will stop at the end of the four years.

Clearly there is a structural change. We are sharing the costs of these changes, because all of Canada will benefit when we create more jobs in the Maritimes, which will certainly be the outcome.

Second, the idea of centralization is perfectly ridiculous. The federal and provincial governments are joining together to reduce the burden on the taxpayers in these provinces and to reduce administrative costs.

Representatives of Canada's accountants' association have said this streamlining will save taxpayers $100 million. They have said that Canadian firms could save as much as $700 million, if we could do the same thing. This is a lot of money, and I think it is worth it.

Now, with the basic point the member is making is that taxpayers in the other provinces should not help in the case of structural change, for example, he is in fact denying the principle of equalization payments, which benefit Quebec enormously.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Finance has any reason to excuse himself to the people of Canada, on behalf of his party, it will be for having made political hay by promising abolition of the GST and then not making good on the promise. That is what he ought to do.

This morning, the government decided to disguise the sales tax by hiding it in the price of goods and services. Yet, while in opposition, the Liberals stated in the dissenting report of 1989 that ''if the GST is camouflaged in the price, it will be far easier for the government to raise it later on''.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. Does the minister acknowledge that, through his operation this morning, all that he has done to make people think that he was eliminating the GST was to hide it in the price of goods and services.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the hon. member does not understand the plan. It is perfectly visible. The tax will be on the bill when the purchaser's bill is rung up. It is visible. There is no intention whatsoever of hiding anything at all. I trust that the hon. member now understands.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on the bill or not, the Prime Minister's commitment, the Minister of Finance's commitment, their party's commitment, was to abolish the GST. The Deputy Prime Minister even laid her seat on the line, as did some other Liberals at election time or shortly thereafter.

Will the minister admit that what he is proposing at last to the people of Quebec and of Canada is what he condemned loudly not so very long ago, disguising the GST in the price, where it will be far easier for the government to raise it from time to time without the public's noticing?

• (1425)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, the tax will not be disguised, it will show on the bill. Second, in the negotiations with the Atlantic provinces, agreement was reached on a mechanism for changing the tax, if a change in the tax was wanted. This means that it will be even harder to raise it. It will require a consensus among the provinces.

I have one other point to make. The hon. member believes that, instead of an integrated federal-provincial tax, instead of implementing in the Maritimes a tax system similar to what there is in Quebec, he is saying there should be a totally different tax, that Quebec should be pushed aside.

I can tell you that, at the meeting of finance ministers, Quebec asked us to really respect their desire to have a tax that can be harmonized with the Quebec sales tax in order to have a uniform tax, for that will be to Quebec's benefit. The hon. member ought to ask his head office if that is what is wanted.

* * *

[*English*]

LIBERAL PARTY

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on page 92 of the Liberal red book the Liberals promised ''more free votes will be allowed in the House of Commons''.

This promise is made in a paragraph which also promises MPs a greater role in drafting legislation through House of Commons' committees. It is obviously talking about a free vote on government legislation, not private members' bills.

There have been some free votes on private members' bills in this Parliament and previous Parliaments, but this Prime Minister has steadfastly refused to allow even one free vote on any government legislation.

When will the Prime Minister live up to his red book promise and allow free votes on government legislation?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to know how many free votes the members of the Reform Party have had lately.

When some members of the Reform Party expressed disagreement about some of that party's policies which were completely unacceptable, they were humiliated in their caucus by the rest of the caucus because they were more moderate and made more sense.

We have had more free votes in this House than ever before. However, when it is a question of confidence in the government, when one has no confidence in the government, then just like the Reform Party, one is in the opposition.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, there is a disgusting pattern emerging in this type of answer.

First we have campaign promises: scrap the GST, free votes in the House of Commons. Then we have the red book interpretation, modification, qualification. Then we have the government's action which is something else again. We end up having a simple, clear promise broken and public trust in the government broken. There is no integrity here.

Is it now the government's position not to allow free votes on government legislation?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about the member keeping his word. The leader of the third party said in 1990 that he called for the election of Reform Party candidates who would rip out the GST. That was in 1990.

In 1991, the leader said that the GST could not be repealed immediately because it would increase the deficit. I am only in 1991. Now I have to move to 1992.

The Reform changed its position yet again, saying that it would reduce the GST in stages after, only after, the budget was balanced.

• (1430)

I compliment him for his great statement: ''We commend the government on its attempt to harmonize the tax with the provinces''.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the question is on free votes. No amount of going around the mulberry bush, no amount of false bravado from the members, will avoid the fact that the question is on free votes in this Parliament.

The Prime Minister is showing the same contempt for question period that he has shown for democratic representation in disciplining the member for York South—Weston.

Liberal spin doctors said that the member for York South—Weston had to be disciplined because he voted against the government, not because he voted against the GST. They implied that if the member had simply voted against the new GST legislation the punishment would not have been necessary.

Let me put this theory to a little test. Will the Prime Minister allow his MPs a free vote on the GST legislation that the finance minister introduced this morning?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have many bills in this House—

Some hon. members: Yes or no, yes or no, yes or no.

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, we have seen the Reform day care program.

We had many votes in this House where sometimes members did not vote with the government. There were many votes. I did not ask them to move to the other side.

I had some discipline. It happened to the former Reform whip who is sitting there, or he was yesterday, who has been changed because he disagreed. We have discipline in the party.

When there is a vote in the House of Commons and the question is: ''Do you have confidence in this government?'' and if you have no confidence in the government, that means that you are no longer a member of that party.

It has been a British tradition for 400 years. I have to tell the member of the third party that a vote of non-confidence in the government leads to what happened.

I have no lessons in democracy to learn from the Reform Party. Yesterday the leader of a party was recognized by the Speaker to ask one question and the Reform Party wanted him to shut up. That is the type of democracy they are preaching.

* * *

[*Translation*]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE REFORM

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

On Saturday, more than 5,000 people from Quebec and New Brunswick, including Acadia, rallied in Rivière-du-Loup as 117 churches in eastern Quebec rang their bells to protest the proposed unemployment insurance reform. The archbishop of the Rimouski diocese himself recently took a stand against the plans concerning

seasonal workers, which he described as a serious threat to the very survival of the regions.

In light of the massive opposition to the unemployment insurance reform and, particularly in the regions, to those rules that severely penalize seasonal workers, does the minister not agree that the best thing to do would be to withdraw this bill and draft a new one in partnership with those concerned, providing for a true reform of the unemployment insurance system?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for two years now, we have been trying to overhaul the unemployment insurance program, or employment insurance program, as it is now called. During these two years, hundreds of groups, organizations, companies and individual citizens were consulted and, since December, when the bill was introduced in this House, presentations have been made and briefs submitted by all kinds of people from every region.

● (1435)

Some people were worried and they expressed their concerns to us. Over the course of a few weeks, the committee to which this bill had been referred heard a number of witnesses, who, again, expressed their views, concerns and worries.

Meanwhile, government members were diligently looking at ways to resolve grievances and claims that were recognized as legitimate. Out of this committee study came amendments that will cost the employment insurance program some $365 million.

These amendments will address the issue of benefits paid on the basis of the number of weeks worked and, in part at least, the problem with the intensity rule, by excluding households making less than $26,000 a year, as well as, to some extent, the issue of the dividing factor used in calculating the benefits to be paid to recipients.

That said, I must admit that we did not achieve perfection. And whatever was achieved, we achieved without any help from the opposition.

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the opposition was consistently shoved aside, and this point will be made over the next few days. What is important to remember is that, regarding the number of hours worked, the researchers who advised the minister—if only he had followed their advice—said: It is a leap in the dark. There are huge problems and, in what he just said, the minister only addressed a reduction in cuts.

My question to the minister is the following: Does he not realize that because he has not heard what all sides had to say and consolidated all the information, hundreds of thousands of families, in fact millions of people, will be hit very hard by his reform in years to come? Does he realize that this reform could even have serious social impacts?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have done our very best to listen to everyone who had anything substantial to say. The problem in this whole process, as those who attended committee meetings and followed our hearings soon realized, is how widely divergent the views held by the various witnesses were.

As far as those responsible for creating jobs in this country are concerned, namely small and medium size businesses, the original act, let alone the amendments, went much too far and was way too flexible. For the Canadian Labour Congress on the other hand, we were much too strict and demanding.

In a situation like this one, the role of government is to try to strike the happy medium and find solutions which, as far as possible, meet the chief requirement, which is, in this case, to help those in need.

I would like to stress the fact that, if there were problems in committee, if some suggestions were overlooked, it is because we did not manage to address every representation that was made. But for the most part—

[*English*]

The Speaker: Time is slipping away. I would ask both the person asking the question and the person answering to please condense their remarks.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the government's harmonization agreement is a half-baked national embarrassment. It is no wonder that the member for Broadview—Greenwood decided to take the high dive from the Liberal caucus.

Not only does this agreement take $1 billion from the many to give to a few Liberal politicians—and I notice that Brian Tobin is here to get his hands on the spoils today—it obviously breaks the Liberal promise to scrap, kill and abolish the GST.

Why is the government laughing in the face of voters by failing to fulfil its promise to scrap the GST?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I dealt with that part of the member's question in my remarks this morning. I said that we were right to criticize the GST. The timing was wrong, it caused duplication and tremendous costs were imposed on business.

● (1440)

I also said in my speech this morning that we were mistaken in believing we could bring in a new tax immediately that would not cause a distortion to the economy. In fact we went through two and one-half years of very hard work. The House of Commons finance committee heard over 500 witnesses and considered 700 briefs. We

looked at a series of over 20 alternatives before coming down with this which is by far the best public policy.

The hon. member can continue along this vein as long as he wants but what is painfully evident is the lack of substance in the Reform Party's questions. The issue is that the Reform Party has stated that it supports harmonization. Does the Reform Party want to deal with the substance of the issue or in fact deal with what Canadians want?

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the member knows that the Liberals ran on the promise to scrap the GST. That is the only reason many of them are here today. Not only that, they fought the Mulroney-Wilson plan to hide the GST. They called it a job killer. Now the revenue minister is saying it is a job creator. They laughed at the Tory attempt to harmonize the GST. The member for York South—Weston was right: power does change people.

If the GST was bad then, why is it not bad now? Are the Liberals saying that Brian Mulroney was right?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the Reform Party said that it supported harmonization in its response to the finance minister, were Reformers saying that Brian Mulroney was right?

The fact is that at the time the Tories did it we talked about it. We were in the middle of a depression. They brought in a tax that was not harmonized and no sufficient attempt was made to do so.

We have brought in fundamental tax reform in Atlantic Canada, something that is going to give Atlantic Canadians a far greater chance to export and to create jobs. We have set in place a process that is going to allow other provinces to come in. We are in the process of changing the nature of fiscal federalism for the benefit of this country. The Reform Party ought to deal with the substance of it.

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[*Translation*]

COAST GUARD

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a clear consensus emerged, during parliamentary consultations, against the fee structure proposed by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans for coast guard services. All those concerned find it irresponsible on the minister's part to impose these fees without conducting complete and serious studies on their impact on the marine industry.

Can the minister tell us if he intends to go along with the consensus of those who are asking for a moratorium on the marine service fees until complete and independent economic impact studies have been carried out?

[*English*]

Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the imposition of the marine services fee stems from the 1995 budget approved by Parliament based on the principle of user pay.

The idea of how the fee could be implemented was put forward by the Marine Advisory Board. There were 800 people or thereabouts involved in the consultations which involved ports officials and every major industry in the seagoing industry.

The hon. member joined his colleagues from Parliament on the fisheries committee to hear the views of many witnesses. The hon. member is right; the committee made recommendations but the consensus was not that there be a moratorium. The committee did express some reservations with respect to the impact studies. I have to tell the House that I will respect its opinions. The impact studies will be carried out after the services fee is implemented at the lowest possible level of collection of $20 million a year before we get to the higher levels.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will try again. Does the minister agree that, far from helping the economy, his draft regulations will result in marine traffic going to American ports, which means jobs moving to the United States and an increase in the number of the unemployed in eastern Canadian ports, particularly those along the St. Lawrence River?

• (1445)

[*English*]

Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is coming up with some far-fetched unsubstantiated ideas.

The hon. member knows because he has heard it often in committee and this House that the cost overall at the $20 million level is going to represent one-sixtieth of one per cent of the value of the goods itself. It is going to represent less than 10 per cent of what it costs the coast guard to maintain these services. It is going to cost less than three per cent of the overall value of the business of doing shipments in the ports of Canada. I think that is fair and equitable.

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SOMALIA INQUIRY

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the irony in this House is unbelievable. On the one hand we have the Prime Minister who gives the boot to a member who has integrity, keeps his word and who does the right thing. On the other hand we have a defence

minister who is responsible for the collapse of morale in the armed forces, whose department hid documents from the Somalia inquiry and the information commissioner and there he sits on the front bench.

How much longer will the Prime Minister allow the defence minister to put his own career over the good functioning and morale of our troops? When will the Prime Minister ask for the minister's resignation?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is the first time that a Minister of National Defence has asked for, authorized and recommended an inquiry into the operation and he has done it.

The time has now come to let the commission do its work. If the Reform Party has any respect for the armed forces, it will let the commission do its work rather than cause the problem with the morale of the troops in asking impertinent questions in the House of Commons.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the defence minister took swift action in the past when it was in his own interests. He disbanded the airborne without an inquiry but what is he doing now? Now he wants to wash his hands of the authority and responsibility for what is happening. If the minister is so confident that his hands are clean, then will he volunteer to appear before the inquiry to be questioned on his role in the defence department scandals?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has shown once again that he has not read the terms of reference for the inquiry. He asks about cover up; he asks about destruction of documents. That is all contained in the inquiry.

If he were to read the terms of reference he would find out who can be summoned to the inquiry. That is up to the inquiry and if it wants to summon whomever it wants, whether they are members of this House or members of the armed forces, the commission has the power to do it.

Before the member raised these kinds of questions, he could get the answers by reading the terms of reference.

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[*Translation*]

RCMP

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Yesterday, we questioned the Prime Minister about the $176,000 contract awarded to Jennifer Lynch, chairperson of the RCMP external review committee, to examine the current grievance system. We think Mrs. Lynch is in conflict of interest since she is also the one who hears the grievances filed by police officers.

Now that the government has had 24 hours to check things out, I would like to repeat the question I put to the Prime Minister. Can the Prime Minister explain why the RCMP granted Mrs. Lynch a one year contract worth $176,000 to review the current grievance system, when her duties require her to remain absolutely neutral toward both parties?

Mr. Nick Discepola (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is true that the grievance settlement process is one of Mrs. Lynch's initiatives. It is part of the consultations between senior management and employees of the RCMP.

I can tell the House that the RCMP agrees that these consultations and this new approach are better suited to the needs of the RCMP.

On the conflict of interest issue, I am also told that the ethics counsellor was consulted and stated that there was no conflict of interest.

• (1450)

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for his answer, but I have a supplementary question.

Besides an ethics problem, we are faced here with a process problem, since the call for tender contained specific requirements tailor made for Mrs. Lynch. Would the parliamentary secretary not agree that the contract was awarded following a rigged advanced contract award notice, as the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and chief government whip feared in a letter, dated July of 1995, to the solicitor general?

Mr. Nick Discepola (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said before, we sought the advice of our ethics counsellor, who reviewed the whole situation and clearly stated that there was no conflict of interest.

* * *

[*English*]

TAXATION

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today the Minister of Finance announced the harmonization of the sales tax system in Atlantic Canada with the federal sales tax.

We hear that business will benefit by improved competitiveness from further export opportunities and a reduced tax burden. How will the average consumer in Atlantic Canada benefit from the reform of the sales tax system?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the calculation is made province by province depending on the particular circumstances. As an example, New Brunswick Minister of Finance Mr. Blanchard estimated that an average family of four in New Brunswick would save between $225 and $250 per year.

Similar numbers could be given for the provinces of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

In addition, consumers will benefit enormously because they will no longer have the cascading effect of embedded taxes built in which are the real hidden taxes consumers will no longer have to pay because business will be getting the input credits. In fact, consumers will be the great beneficiaries of all of this.

Another thing which is very important to note is that this is going to increase jobs in Atlantic Canada. The fact is that consumers buy because they have jobs. This is the best structural thing we could have brought to the maritimes.

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FISHERIES

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of fisheries.

The government cost of fisheries management in Iceland is $24 per tonne of fish landed. In Norway it is $85 per tonne of fish landed. In Canada it is $455 per tonne of fish landed. In spite of this massive expenditure, DFO has been unable either to predict or prevent the fisheries crises on both coasts.

As the fisheries minister is demanding a 50 per cent reduction in the B.C. salmon fleet, is he going to cut his bureaucracy by 50 per cent as well?

Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the hon. member that in view of Reform's position on the GST and what is taking place with that, I am delighted that Reform is interested in having the government cut down its operations.,

In the last year the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has undergone quite a cut through program review. While we have not reached 50 per cent, the department I represent is cutting by over 40 per cent. That is not a bad perspective from where I sit.

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about cuts. The government has cut the salmon hatcheries in British Columbia in the face of a crisis.

The minister's new licensing policy has nothing whatsoever to do with conservation. It does not put the fish first and it certainly does not put B.C.'s coastal communities first. Over all, fish harvesting capacity will remain the same, just concentrated in fewer hands.

Will the minister guarantee when his new licensing policy fails to reduce the total fish harvest in B.C. and after he has sacrificed the futures of fishermen in B.C. coastal communities, that he and his government will accept responsibility for that?

Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the member talks about coastal communities and economic viability and capacity reduction, he knows very well he is talking about an industry that is in very poor shape. There are fishermen over the last few years who have lost much money. This year over 50 per cent are expected to lose money. The industry itself is expected to lose around $10 million. He is talking about an industry that is in trouble.

• (1455)

I have to tell the member that the plan which is represented by the Pacific salmon revitalization program stemmed from a committee report of stakeholders of the commercial fisheries, the aboriginal fisheries, the recreational fisheries, the coastal communities and the province of British Columbia. They made 27 recommendations and we moved on them.

The member asked me if I was going to be responsible for the plan. I will take responsibility for this plan. Will Reformers take responsibility for the fact that they have no plan?

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[*Translation*]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Industry admitted in this House that with respect to direct to home satellite services, and I quote: ''There might be a potential problem for consumers—consumers must examine their options very carefully before they buy''. But under the legislation, the Minister of Industry has responsibility for technological development, as well as protecting the consumer public.

Since the minister does not intend to follow up on the recommendation made to him by my colleague from Rimouski—Témiscouata that there be an information campaign on the real risks of buying a satellite dish and a decoder, does the minister intend to follow up on the suggestion from Quebec's culture minister, Mrs. Beaudoin, that direct to home satellite businesses be encouraged to rent their equipment rather than sell it, in order to protect the consumer?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member very well knows, technology is changing rapidly in the broadcasting sector. It is always possible that technological changes will mean that equipment bought by consumers is rendered unusable.

The most important thing for the consumer is to take the time to do a bit of research before buying. But they know very well, and I believe Mrs. Beaudoin knows it too, that regulating retail sales to consumers comes under provincial jurisdiction.

[*English*]

KREVER INQUIRY

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my dad had open heart surgery on Sunday and I am glad to say that everything went fine.

One of his biggest worries was whether he would need a blood transfusion. His concerns are shared by many Canadians. In fact, a new survey indicates that only 7 per cent of Canadians would accept a transfusion if they had a choice. The confidence in our blood system is slipping away from us.

I call upon the Minister of Justice to get rid of the lawyers that are holding up the Krever inquiry. Let Krever tell his story, all of it.

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I begin by expressing the hope that the hon. member's father recovers quickly from surgery. I know I speak for all of my colleagues in saying that.

Let us focus on confidence in Canada's blood system. The very reason the Minister of Health appointed the Krever inquiry, the very reason this government extended its term and increased its budget and the reason this government brought evidence before the inquiry was to ensure that a thorough and complete evaluation of the blood system would be carried out so that we would have the benefit of Mr. Justice Krever's recommendations to get the system right.

It is true to say that justice lawyers are in federal court for a hearing on May 22 in relation to procedural matters. We are there not to interfere with Mr. Justice Krever's work, not to delay it or to complicate it, we are there on specific questions of procedural fairness that are important points of principle.

We have asked the court to expedite the hearing. We hope it will be over quickly. We want the report completed. We look forward to the findings, whether they be findings of fault or otherwise. We want to get the blood system back where it should be and the confidence of Canadians restored.

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[*Translation*]

MIDDLE EAST

Mr. Raymond Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Cooperation.

Canadians have followed with great concern and emotion the tragic events that have occurred in the Middle East these last few days.

• (1500)

Given the marked interest Canada has always shown for the quick settlement of this conflict, can the minister describe to the House the latest developments aimed at restoring peace for all the families and children of the Middle East?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question, as this will be the first answer I give in the House.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pettigrew: Canada has asked for a ceasefire in the Middle East and we will continue to closely monitor the situation and to support all the negotiations currently going on at the diplomatic level.

We hope that the parties will reach an agreement soon. In fact, the Government of Canada is ready to support these efforts. We also made our views known to the Security Council, on April 18. We supported the resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in the Middle East. We have asked other states to support this resolution and the ongoing diplomatic negotiations and to respect the territorial integrity of the Lebanese Republic.

Canada considers all these attacks on the civilian population and United Nations personnel totally unacceptable. Canada is particularly—

The Speaker: I am sorry, but I have to interrupt the hon. member, although he did give a good answer.

* * *

[*English*]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Prime Minister. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance said in their most recent budget they had done what they could do and that it was now up to the private sector to create jobs.

The private sector seems to be giving the Salmon Arm salute to the budget in respect of the challenge issued to the private sector. We see a Kenworth plant using NAFTA to take jobs out of Quebec and go to Mexico, GM outsourcing, and putting pressure on wages.

When will the Prime Minister get tough with Canada's corporate sector and make it act like the responsible corporate citizen he wants it to be? When will do something about this kind of behaviour?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the last three months the economy has created 135,000 jobs.

Since we formed the government, two and a half years ago this week, the economy has created 596,000 jobs.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of the House to the presence in the gallery of one of our peacekeepers. Permit me to bask a little in his personal glory for what he did for Canada in that he is a former student of mine.

I refer you to Chief Superintendent Gaetan Neil Pouliot, the former commissioner of civilian police for the U.N. mission in Haiti.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—MAN'S INHUMANITY TO MAN

The House resumed of the motion, the amendment, and the amendment to the amendment.

● (1505)

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of those at home who have not been following this debate, once in a while there is a debate that speaks to the very heart of what Parliament is all about and what the world parliament should all be about and how we relate one to another.

The Bloc put forward a motion today that would call on the Government of Canada to use the word genocide in condemnation of what transpired primarily in the years around 1915 by the Turks, addressed primarily to the Armenians.

The motion was amended by the Liberals to take the word genocide out. Liberals opposite would concur with the notion that genocide did take place but for political reasons cannot use the word genocide. Our position was to insert the word genocide in a subamendment so as to be true to the meaning the Bloc originally put forward.

This is a particularly important debate. While the events took place many years ago and half way around the world, they affect each and every one of us every day.

A couple of years ago I was at a dinner party. A person there, now in his sixties, a great raconteur, was regaling us with stories of his youth. He name is Jack Cohen. He was telling us of the time when he was in an orphanage in Montreal. When he was four years old he and his twin brother saw this great man come into the orphanage to pick out a child. They knew, just like a bunch of

puppies I guess, they had to get up and catch the attention of the person coming into the orphanage if they were to get a home.

He and his brother were a little older than some of the other children in the orphanage. When this man came in each of them grabbed Jack Cohen's father by the leg and would not let go.

We were laughing about the word picture of these two little boys holding on to this man who had been sent to Montreal from Edmonton get a little girl, as it turns out. They would not let go. When he came home he was telling how his mother found she had twin boys rather than a little girl.

It was one of those stories that we laugh at but inside in our hearts we are kind of crying at the tragedy that caused this to take place. It is funny because of the ability of Jack as a storyteller to make what is really a tragic story palatable and something that we could understand.

Jack and his brother were not alone. There were thousands and thousands of children just like him who were survivors of the death camps. Every relative Jack and his twin brother had was exterminated. Because they were twins they were put into a special compound and for one reason or another they managed to survive. What does this have to do with the debate at hand? How do we get to that?

● (1510)

We get to it because of the notion of denial. This is the elemental concern behind the government's position and why the government is in great difficulty voting for this motion when it incorporates the word genocide. Even though the Governments of Quebec and Ontario in 1980 passed unanimous motions stating the Turkish government should be made to recognize what had gone on, when we as a government aid and abet a denial we are participating in the cover-up.

I know Canadians do not want to be part of it. I am sure the vast majority of Turks today would not want to be part of a cover-up. The only way we can possibly learn from history is to recognize it and go on from there.

For people watching not all that familiar about the events that took place, let me go back through a bit of history. This really did not start in 1915. It started even before the late 1800s. The Chinese built a great wall to protect themselves from the Ottoman hordes, as they are described. The Armenians had been occupying that part of the world for 3000 years. The Turks came into that part of the world and began moving them out. It really started to take definition in the late 1800s.

In 1915 all men between 16 and 60 were drafted into the army. There being two sides to every story, and there always is a shade of grey, it is important to understand that the Turks' position is that the Armenians joined the Russians and were fighting with the Russians against the Turks. That is why the genocide took place. That is why they were moved out and moved offshore.

There is a good deal of dispute about the exact numbers. However, does it matter if it was 1.5 million, 1 million or 800,000? If it was one it was one too many. Genocide, as defined by *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* is the mass extermination of human beings, especially of a particular race or nation. Any mass slaughter is by definition genocide. One cannot whitewash genocide. We cannot use words to make it sound better. Genocide is genocide.

The ground zero of the genocide that took place against the Armenians in Turkey is when, on April 24, 1915, the interior minister of Turkey said in 50 years the only Armenians will be in museums.

Today all that remains in Turkey of the Armenians, who were the people who were there first, are between 30,000 and 50,000, most in Istanbul. Today the situation in Turkey for the Armenians left is such that when their churches, schools and cultural institutions need repair the Armenians must apply to the interior ministry of Turkey to have them repaired.

● (1515)

What is the link between my story of Jack Cohen and the situation that exists today? It is this. Hitler, when asked before the holocaust what would mankind say in light of what he was doing, responded: ''Who remembers the Armenians?'' The genocide against the Armenians was the foundation of other genocides to come. It was the foundation for the mass extermination of the Jews of Europe.

What is so chilling, so frightening, so repulsive about what is going on in our world today and how does it link to the genocide perpetrated against the Armenians? In my view the link is denial.

Who will speak for all of the dead? Who will speak for those who will die in future genocides if we do not recognize and honour those who died before us? In my view it is the denial of what took place that is the most reprehensible aspect of what is before us today. We know we cannot change history. We know we cannot reverse the hands of time. We know that what happened, happened. We know that Canada has a relationship with Turkey today. We know and understand that the vast majority of people in Turkey had nothing to do with what happened in 1915 and would be just as repulsed today as we are.

Basically people are good, but genocide goes on day after day all around the world. We do not seem to learn from our mistakes. Perhaps that is because in one way or another we try to pretend that it does not exist because it is just too hard to bear.

That is what is going on in Canada and around the world with the holocaust denial. That is why it is so important that light is brought to this situation so that those who went before us are not forgotten.

In Canada, even as we speak, people deny the holocaust. They say it was impossible. How could mankind be so cruel? How could a cultured and enlightened people perpetrate such a horror against mankind, such a horror against the Jews and others, but specifically against the Jews? How could the people of a whole nation turn their eyes or not see it?

Perhaps there is a germ of a reason for that in what is happening today. Perhaps we do not believe what we do not want to believe. Let me give an example of what is going on today in holocaust denial and link it to the events which took place in 1915 in Turkey.

The people at the Ecole polytechnique in Montreal and the University of Montreal will shortly hear a speaker. There will be at Ecole polytechnique a conference sponsored by 15 Muslim organizations. The person speaking is a revisionist historian and anti-Semite, Roger Garaudy. This person is coming to these two institutions. He has a right in a free society to express his views.

● (1520)

The problem is that when someone in a free society is able to expound his revisionist theories which are generally known to be untrue and does so as an academic, that person puts a cloak of respectability on history which was not there before.

We live in a free society and people have the right to say what they will, provided they are not spreading hate propaganda. The fact is these revisionists, these people who are rewriting history, must be challenged and challenged at every opportunity. If we do not, we run a risk. What will certainly happen is that we will repeat the mistakes we made in the past.

I would like to conclude my comments with this thought: Anything that diminishes any one of us as a human being hurts and diminishes all of us. We are all human beings. Regardless of our gender, skin colour, sexual orientation we are all human beings. We are all children of the same God. When any one of us is diminished we are all diminished.

It is desperately important that every time violations of human rights occur, for example, the revisionists who deny history, who try to change history and cloak what actually happened with some sort of respectability, or the apologists for something that is beyond apology, then others must stand up and tell the truth of what happened. We cannot pretend it did not happen. It is important for our grandchildren that we are aware of the foundation and where we came from.

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by the hon. member from the Reform Party.

Why does the hon. member think that the Turkish government today, 81 years after the fact of the genocide, still denies the crime

that its ancestors committed in 1915? Why does Turkey not follow the example set by Germany to accept the responsibility and address the issue? No matter what kind of resolutions we pass in this House or any Parliament in this country, the responsibility remains: The Turkish government has to accept responsibility.

Why does Turkey up until now, 81 years after the fact, still refuse to accept responsibility for 1915?

Mr. McClelland: Mr. Speaker, that question speaks to the nub of what is going on here today. It also speaks to the difficult position the government is in.

I am quite certain that the vast majority of members opposite would like to support a resolution which includes the word genocide, but do not because of geopolitics or whatever.

As I understand it, the Government of Turkey would go a long way to address the problems concerning this by recognizing what has taken place. Turkey applied three years ago for admission into the European community and was refused admission because it has not recognized its complicity in the events of the genocide of 1915.

• (1525)

That was a condition of entry into the European community and Turkey will not do it. It will not because it feels that they were wartime casualties and that no deliberate mass slaughter took place. Turkey says that the Armenians who died had aligned themselves with Russia, were enemies of Turkey and that the relocation of Armenians who perished, because the relocation took place in the winter, had been collaborators in the Russian army. There is also concern that by admitting guilt or by admitting complicity the Turks would be leaving themselves open to judgments or to claims against them.

I believe the very best thing the Government of Turkey can do at this time is to say: ''We were wrong. We would never do that again. It is a blight on our history. We recognize it as being wrong''. That is exactly what the German government has done.

I attended a wedding on the weekend. The minister said there are nine words which should never be forgotten in making a marriage work and last. At least six of those words could be used in our relations with other countries and six of those words could be used by the Government of Turkey in addressing the Armenians. Those nine words were: ''I am sorry. Please forgive me. I love you''. I suspect, as the minister said in conducting the marriage service, that if the Government of Turkey were to say to the Armenian community: ''I am sorry. Please forgive what has happened and let us live together in peace,'' it would be the beginning of a first step to a new future.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Mr. Speaker, you are indicating that I have one minute left to ask a question or make a brief comment. I will comment the question and then go back to my colleague for Edmonton Southwest regarding the member for Don Valley North. I find it odd that he should put such a question to our Reform colleague; he should have put it to the government since the government, through the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism, moved an amendment to the motion we brought forward, with a view to considering not so much the genocide of Armenians as the tragedy it represents.

The problem today is on the government side. We agree with the member for Don Valley North that pressure should be brought to bear on the Turkish government to get it to recognize the genocide of Armenians and take measures to right, if possible, the wrongs done to this community.

As far as my colleague for Edmonton Southwest is concerned, I want first to congratulate him on his speech. Liberal members like to depict Reform members as right-wing. My colleague, who also sits on the human rights committee, has taken a perfectly correct position and shown how important human rights are for him and how important it is not to make any compromise in this respect.

My question goes along the same lines. I would like my colleague to tell us what his position and his party's position are with regard to human rights and international trade.

• (1530)

How far should Canada go in making concessions? Should it make any at all? For my part, I believe it should make none, but in his opinion, how far should the government go in making concessions regarding human rights and international trade?

[*English*]

Mr. McClelland: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the kind words.

The only way we can possibly affect the way a particular country might work within its own borders as far as human rights are concerned is if we have a dialogue. There are situations in which if all countries work in unison we may be able to force an issue as far as human rights are concerned. We have far more to gain by ensuring that we can work with a country to somehow imbue that country with our notion of what is correct and right as far as human rights are concerned.

When the situation is one where a ruler or a regime goes beyond what is right, then the only way Canada can show it will not participate or will not countenance a particular situation is to cut

off trade and dissociate itself from that. As long as there is the possibility of improving the relationship with a particular country then I think we have the right and the responsibility to trade and work with it while constantly trying to improve its human rights record. If it cannot and will not be done, then we have a moral responsibility to have nothing to do with that country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have before us today an important motion calling for the commemoration of the tragic events of April 1915 in Armenia. The motion asks the House to recognize the week of April 20 to 27 of each year as the week to commemorate man's inhumanity to man.

The proposed motion refers to the concept of genocide, a concept relatively recent as to form and content. In fact it was defined and codified only in 1948, when the convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide was adopted.

We do acknowledge that the Armenian community was victimized and that Armenian people were killed in 1915, but we must remain cautious in defining those events with a concept that was coined and codified only years later.

Also, the Turkish government of today is not the Ottoman empire of yesterday, which was responsible for the killings. The word ''genocide'' entails specific obligations, as stated in the provisions of the international convention.

The question is, if this House were to acknowledge that the concept applies to the events of 1915, could that bring about an obligation to some form of compensation for historical prejudice? I applaud today's motion because it forces all Canadians to reflect upon history.

[*English*]

It is difficult to imagine anything positive resulting from the horrific events that marked the first half of this century. The tremendous loss of millions of innocent victims such as the Armenians in April 1915 continues to haunt us today. Perhaps however the victims of these calamities did not suffer and die in vain. From their courage and our collective shame has emerged a strong legacy, the recognition of human rights as a duty of all states.

Grounded in the universal declaration of human rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948, this legacy has led to an impressive collection of human rights instruments. These documents set out the rights of the individual and equally important, the corresponding duties of states to respect, protect and promote those rights.

• (1535)

Why should Canadians care about human rights in far off places? Human rights violations affect us all. They undermine our basic humanity and prevent us as a global society from progressing. Equally important, when these abuses reach widespread and systemic levels, our own security is threatened. The Minister of Foreign Affairs said it best during his recent statement to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights:

> If we turn away from the desolation and dismay of human suffering, if we fail to stop hatred from flowing through the channels of our new electronic networks, if we do not care about the present or future of vulnerable children, if we do not stand up to the despots and bullies, if we do not counter the capricious and arbitrary actions of authoritarian governments with no legitimacy beyond weaponry and terror, then we will face the harsh consequences down the road.

It is therefore very much in the interests of Canadians to work to prevent human rights abuses throughout the world so as to avoid the kinds of tragic events we have heard described in the House. If we compare the protection of human rights today with the situation of 80 years ago when the Armenian massacre occurred, we see tremendous progress.

Drawing inspiration from the universal declaration, numerous international treaties and principles have been adopted. The two international covenants represent the most important of these, but the many other instruments address specific fundamental human rights concerns, everything from genocide and torture to the rights of women, children and the disabled.

These instruments have broadened the scope of human rights and have enhanced protection for all of us. The task of defining and codifying human rights is largely complete although important areas remain to be addressed, such as human rights defenders and the rights of indigenous people.

We must recognize that the framework of human rights instruments is not in itself sufficient to protect us from the scourge of human rights abuses. We need only look at the events in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda among others to acknowledge that humanity still has failed to rid itself of acts of barbarism and hatred. The Canadian government is firmly committed to finding lasting solutions to these problems.

As a recognized leader in the human rights field internationally, Canada has worked to develop the institutions and machinery to ensure that human rights recognized on paper are respected in reality. In organizations such as the United Nations, the Commonwealth, la Francophonie, the Organization of American States and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Canada has and continues to play an active role in advancing the human rights agenda.

One of the most important developments in recent years is the creation of the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Responsible for the co-ordination of all human

rights activities within the UN system, the high commissioner is poised to play an influential role in strengthening protection of human rights.

Although severely underfunded, the creation of the post has already had a salutary effect. In the aftermath of the Rwanda crisis, the high commissioner was able to mobilize a team of human rights monitors and establish them on the ground. Despite some initial problems, the human rights mission has helped to improve the situation for Rwandans, both in the country and in the refugee camps. Canada played an important role in the establishment of this mission.

Recently the Minister of Foreign Affairs announced a further contribution of $500,000 to support the human rights field operations in Rwanda. A separate grant of $300,000 was also announced by the minister for a similar program in the former Yugoslavia. These operations of the high commissioner are critical for they represent the first forays into the areas of early warning conflict prevention and post-conflict peacekeeping.

The ability of the United Nations and specifically the high commissioner for human rights to place observers and monitors on the ground should go a long way toward identifying the root causes of gross violations of human rights and to play a role in finding solutions to these problems.

• (1540)

These monitoring operations can and should play the role of the eyes of the international community, alerting the world to potential disasters in the making. In so doing they can hopefully provide sufficient time to allow the United Nations or other bodies to prevent or minimize human rights abuses.

A key element of the field operations is human rights education and training of the military, police and other important actors. Breaking down the culture of violence is fundamental to finding lasting solutions. Through education and training, the UN is seeking to create an ingrained respect for the rule of law among those in places of authority. The goal is laudable but it is impossible to achieve in the world's troubled areas unless the international community devotes greater resources to the UN's human rights program.

Canada is doing its part even as we work to put our own financial house in order. The challenge for Canada is to maintain its commitment and convince other states of the critical importance of supporting the UN high commissioner.

Monitoring and training are but one part of the efforts to prevent gross violations of human rights. A second important factor is for the international community to send a clear signal to the perpetrators of human rights abuses that their transgressions will no longer be tolerated. The tribunals established to deal with war criminals in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda are an important start. Already a number of persons have been charged and prosecutions are expected to commence in the near future.

As critical as these tribunals are, they remain ad hoc bodies established to deal with the circumstances arising from two tragic events. Will the necessary political will exist to establish similar bodies should these types of events happen elsewhere?

To avoid the problem of attempting to develop solutions in the immediate aftermath of an incident, the world community today is considering the establishment of a permanent international criminal court to deal with war criminals. Negotiations on the court have commenced under UN auspices. While the negotiations are difficult, Canada, which is playing an active role, is hopeful that a positive outcome can be achieved. Once established, the court will stand as a monument to the international community's resolve to fight barbarism and to punish those who would shock the conscience of the world.

As regards Armenia, Canada is a friend of Armenia. Although this country is only four years old, Canada has been working to help Armenia deal with the problems of nation building and to resolve the difficulties which that country and that society have had to deal with in the early stages of its nationhood.

For example, Canada has supported Armenia in dealing with the ravages of an earthquake in the Leninakan region in 1988 and has been contributing to finding a solution to the debilitating war in the Nagorno-Karabakh which has extracted a terrible toll on the people of the region and has aggravated the difficulties of building that nation in that region.

I have spoken at length on human rights. I cannot overemphasize their importance in preventing the kinds of situations we are discussing today: the massacres, ethnic cleansing and other egregious acts such as the Armenian tragedy of 1915, that have occurred in the past and which we have again recently witnessed, all started with isolated violations of human rights.

Would the situations in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia have occurred as they did if international human rights institutions had been in place to alert and the international community ready and willing to act effectively to protect the victims of the initial human rights violations? We may never know, but the chances are that some lives and some communities could have been spared the suffering they endured. We owe it to them, to past victims of widespread transgressions and to ourselves to do what we can to ensure that these atrocities do not happen again.

● (1545)

Through its continued active participation in the UN and other international bodies, and through our support for human rights institutions such as the office of the UN high commissioner for human rights, Canada can make a difference.

I salute the Bloc Quebecois motion. At the same time, to fully give justice to all those, first among them the Armenians who by birth or ancestry have been victimized by the inhumanity of war and oppression, I call on the House to join with the government in supporting an amendment which will proclaim the week of April 20 to 27 each year as the week to remember the inhumanity of people toward one another.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the remarks made by my colleague from Cape Breton Highlands—Canso. He referred to all the decisions made by Canada to participate in peacekeeping missions. He ended his speech by reminding us of Canada's great friendship with Armenia, but his last words reflected his government's tendency to play down the importance of the 1915 events and to dodge the real issue, namely the 1915 genocide of the Armenian people.

Since my colleague has established a link with the first world war, as though it were the only motive for trying to exterminate a whole people, I would like him to elaborate on this.

My question concerns international trade. I would like our colleague to tell us to what extent Canada, or its government, must overlook human rights in order to maintain trade relations with any country that abuses human rights?

Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Bloc member for his question. Canada does not deny what occurred in 1915. However, the term ''genocide'' is very specific in international law and was defined only later. It became part of the international corpus of human right legislation only later, and the Government of Canada feels that this is not the term to use to describe tragedies, massacres or events which occurred earlier in history.

It goes without saying that we live in an imperfect world and, throughout history, many events showed man's inhumanity to man. Canada is at the forefront of nations to create a structure which, in the future, will limit if not eliminate such events. We want to create a sense of respect for human rights, whether in the former Yugoslavia, in Rwanda or elsewhere, to make sure that we remember the lessons of history and do not repeat them.

● (1550)

This is what the policy of the Canadian government aims to do. We want to ensure that, without necessarily always looking back, we move forward by creating a sense of respect for human rights. We must work at the international level to create structures that will allow us to anticipate problems. We must prevent massacres which, unfortunately, continue to occur in certain parts of the world. Over time, by working together as members of the international community, we hope to gradually eliminate such tragedies.

[*English*]

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I fully express support on this motion of course. Will the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs agree with me that because of the geographic location of Turkey and Armenia, adjacent to one another, practically neighbours, it would be better for Turkey to address this issue once and for all and have a good friendly relationship with Armenia for the future? This is a stumbling block for developing a good relationship in the region.

Would the parliamentary secretary agree with me that if Turkey accepts responsibility it would enhance the relationship between Armenia and Turkey so they can go forward building the Armenian republic again?

Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, it is not a question I can answer on behalf of Turkey. I certainly hope the Government of Turkey would be willing to do whatever necessary to improve relations with its neighbours, including Armenia, and would work in their bilateral relations.

Armenia is now a nation state, like Turkey. I hope they would work collectively in the organizations of which they are both members, notably the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, other organizations in Europe as well a the United Nations, to enable their societies to develop progressively together, notwithstanding the tragedies that have occurred in the past.

Naturally Canada would support that and would want to encourage both sides to improve their relations and to do whatever is necessary to get over this historical conflict between the two peoples.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am deeply touched by the motion put forward by the hon. member for Ahuntsic, who has been very active over the years within the Armenian community.

When we talk about the concept of crimes against humanity, it is crucial to remember the profound significance of what they

represent. However, to define these actions does not explain this kind of almost inhumane behaviour.

I would like to quote the definition given by the Liberal member for Don Valley North, Sarkis Assadourian, last April when he moved a motion similar to the one now before the House. ''The first time this term was used was in the London Charter of 1945, the structure and basis for prosecution of major war crimes before the international tribunal at Nuremberg. Crime against humanity presents a distinct category of international crimes. Article 6(c) of the charter defines crimes against humanity as murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population before or during the war; or persecution on political, racial or religious grounds in execution of all in connection with any crime within the jurisdiction of the tribunal whether or not in violation of the domestic laws of the country where the crime was perpetrated.''

• (1555)

So as to not downplay the cruelty of actions taken against civilians, it is essential to remember, at least during the commemorative week, that behind these words are people, friends and faces.

On April 16, 1984, the People's Tribunal concluded that the Armenian genocide occurred in 1915 and 1916. The UN, however, still does not recognize this well known fact because, according to a former Quebec justice minister, Herbert Marx, and I quote from the May 23, 1984 issue of *Le Devoir*: ''—because of the interventions of the Turkish government within the UN itself, the Armenian genocide is not yet officially recognized''. And yet we know that nearly 1.5 million Armenians were exterminated.

The conspiracy of silence cannot go on, and these actions, as in the case of the Jewish people, must be recognized historically.

Still today, in 1996, over 120 peoples are victims of armed oppression and all kinds of violence from ideological adversaries in religious, racial or political conflicts. The use of military or armed means to resolve human conflicts must be banned from the behaviour of all peoples on this earth.

Canada must, through its democratic practices, continue to set an example and tirelessly condemn any resolution of conflict other than by peaceful, civilized and democratic means. These civilized means are part of the basic arsenal of peoples who respect human rights. Canada must take a stand and promote the resolution of human conflict by willpower, rather than by armed power.

By remaining silent or declining to recognize even a simple week commemorating crimes of genocide, particularly those committed against the Armenian people in 1915, Canada is encouraging the incomprehensible policy of letting time erode memory.

This simple recognition is in no way comparable to the seriousness of these reprehensible actions, but for Canadians it represents an assurance that their country will never support peoples who use these vile means as national policy, whoever they may be.

This symbolic gesture is significant for the entire international community and shows once again that Canada is among the great defenders of human rights. This symbolic gesture does not, however, have the same force of impact as a foreign policy that would, at all times, place human interests above trade interests. In fact, it is our foreign policy that leads us to think that the government will not support our motion; the proof is the amendment introduced for the same reasons that moved them to halt construction of a monument commemorating the genocide in Montreal this year. These reasons have to do with trade and can be found in the report of the joint committee reviewing Canadian foreign policy: non-interference and indifference. This report is quite revealing, with Canada systematically ignoring the importance of universal values of democracy and human rights.

The government's recent dealings with its trade partners makes me fear the worst. Far worse than the rejection of our motion, I fear the rejection of human rights in the name of business. What are we to think when Craig Kielburger, a young Canadian defending the rights of children in India, calls our Prime Minister to reason?

• (1600)

What are we to make of the Prime Minister's silence regarding the war in Chechnya, which is cruelly affecting civilians, during the G-7 summit on nuclear and security matters held in Russia, when well-known organisations for the defence of human freedoms such as Doctors Without Borders were doing nothing less than calling this conflict ''the worst war in the world''.

Such oversights, such silence are easier, and create no obligation. In a devious way they are promoting the violent resolution of human conflicts and oblivion. I hope I am wrong regarding the government's intentions, and that reason will allow us to have a collective memory so that we will never forget all these atrocities.

To this effect, we, in the Bloc Quebecois, urge the present government to set aside one week commemorating man's inhumanity to man, on the occasion of the 81st anniversary of the Armenian genocide. Only then will we be able to truly say that Canada is a true champion of human rights.

We remember the genocide of Armenians and we want everybody in Canada to remember it forever. This is the reason why we

brought this motion forward. This is a matter of respect for and friendship with the Armenian people and its history.

[*English*]

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to see the Leader of the Opposition grandstanding on this very important human rights issue.

I asked on three previous occasions if members of the Bloc Quebecois would undertake to write to their former leader, the premier of Quebec, Lucien Bouchard, and ask him to replace the monument which was reneged on by the mayor of Montreal after it was promised to the Armenian people and after he received their votes.

Would he write a letter to the premier of Quebec, since he is so anxious to help build bridges between the Parti Quebecois, the Bloc Quebecois and minorities, ethnics and those who have the money? Would he undertake in this House on behalf of his party to ask the premier of Quebec to build a monument in Quebec City or Montreal in memory of the 1.5 million Armenians who died in the first genocide of this century?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, the kind of debate we are having today should not give rise to acrimonious exchanges between the member and ourselves. All I want to say is this: How can they take advantage of such a debate to try to make the premier of Quebec bear the federal government's responsibility which it shares with the city of Montreal?

The member should take advantage of this debate to remind his party that the motion brought forward by the Bloc Quebecois is a tribute to the Armenian people and bears witness to our respect and friendship, as I said earlier. This motion must not be amended. It must not be weakened.

He who is of Armenian origin should convince his party that we cannot accept a diluted and watered down motion. We would like to have his support and the support of the government to pass this resolution as it stands, without being afraid of bearing witness to the Armenian genocide, not the Armenian tragedy.

When you know the rules of the House, you are fully aware that soon we will be asked to vote on a sub-amendment moved by the Reform Party referring to the tragedy of the Armenian genocide, and we know that the government will vote against it. We are expecting it.

● (1605)

We are also aware that we will be asked to vote on a motion brought forward by the government, which mentions the Armenian tragedy instead of the Armenian genocide. There is a slight difference. We would like for everyone, including the member, to make sure the motion brought forward by the member for Ahuntsic is not weakened. For us it is absolutely essential that the House clearly pay tribute and homage to the Armenian people, recognizing that Armenians were indeed the victims of a genocide.

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, by tabling a motion urging us as parliamentarians to recognize the Armenian genocide regardless of partisan considerations, the official opposition wants to show clearly that it remembers and hopes to help increase public awareness of what is probably the greatest tragedy, the most unacceptable, the most intolerable, the most shameful thing that can happen in the life of a society. Genocide must be condemned as a totally unacceptable instrument of national policy.

This is an extremely sad day in Canadian politics because we now know that there are hypocritical members in this Parliament. There are people who talk from both sides of their mouths. This is extremely sad, because we as parliamentarians had a rare opportunity to join together in reminding ourselves that violence has played too large a role in this century.

The history of the Armenian people is that of a persistent, continuous determination to survive and assert themselves. Historic Armenia, the great Armenia, which stretched from the Black Sea to Mesopotamia, covered an area of 300,000 square kilometres.

Armenia was independent until 1045, until the Middle Ages. Historiographers agree that what kept Armenia independent and united until the Middle Ages was its religion, its language and its settlement of ancestral lands. It is in the 19th century that the Armenians' world came crashing down.

According to historians, three successive governments are to blame for the scattering and genocide of the Armenian community.

Like the Armenian people, we remember the government of Hamid II. We also remember that, at the turn of the century, there was a hope for the future because of a democratic government, an apparently liberal government advocating greater freedom of speech, a government that could have been more sensitive to the Armenian community. However, the new Turkish government did not turn out that way. After the Republic of Armenia was proclaimed, one might have expected things to change, but they did not, which brings us to the events of 1915-17, when 1.5 million people died in the Armenian genocide.

Let us stop for a moment to try to understand what could be happening in this Parliament today. We have a member who, since he was democratically elected by the people of Ahuntsic, has been an extraordinary ally of the Armenian community. We have, in the person of the hon. member for Ahuntsic, someone who has made us sensitive to what has been the very first genocide of the 20th century. Without any partisanship, this member is calling on us, as parliamentarians, to remember. Why? Because by remembering, we avoid making the same mistakes over and over. I am convinced that all our fellow parliamentarians who will participate in this

debate today will remember and want to remember, without acrimony or hostility, so that history does not repeat itself.

• (1610)

Why did this government not hesitate for a moment to release $500,000 to help set up a war crimes tribunal in the former Yugoslavia? This tribunal will not only try to understand what happened, but also to identify and take action against those responsible. I clearly recall sitting in this House as the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Immigration made her speech, in which she indicated that this tribunal would have nine members, including a Canadian lawyer, and the word ''genocide'' was used without hesitation.

The same with the recent events in Rwanda, although we were not afraid to take a lucid look at the situation in that particular case. We were not afraid to call things by their rightful name, seeing that, as parliamentarians, we believe in the power of words. Anyone who believes in the power of words is able to use the appropriate word. In this case, the word to use in our speeches—and we should say it loud and clear in a unanimous voice—is not tragedy, desolation, exaction or wrongdoing, it is genocide.

Why is this government afraid, insecure all of sudden and carrying partisanship to the point of acting like a tartuffe and an hypocrite, by making all kinds of amendments to dilute a motion that would have made us grow in stature as parliamentarians. I will tell you why. And I do not think it takes a Ph.D. in political science to figure out what the members opposite are up to.

We all know that Turkey is a middle power in the Middle East. We also know that Turkey plays a lead role, it is a key player within NATO. This government refuses to seize the opportunity to take its responsibilities and to truly promote human rights by calling a spade a spade.

Do you think Armenians are proud of the Canadian government today? Do you think anyone working for non-profit organizations, in the international co-operation sector, or for any of the major international organizations responsible for the protection of human rights is proud of the hypocritical attitude of this government? No.

A few days ago, I had the pleasure of attending the UN conference on human rights, in Geneva. The speeches made on that occasion by the Canadian delegation stressed how supportive and involved Canada was regarding any international mission that concerns human rights. Where is the consistency between being involved in any number of UN initiatives to promote human rights and being about to vote like this government?

Some might say that, when it comes to history, all sorts of interpretations can be made. I will conclude by reminding you of something very important. In April 1984, the Permanent People's Tribunal was asked to answer the three following questions: Was the Armenian people a victim of deportation and massacre during the First World War? Second question: Do these events constitute a genocide? Third question: What were the consequences, both for the international community and for the parties involved?

• (1615)

The answer is as follows, and I conclude with that: The Permanent People's Tribunal, whose members could all have sat on the International court of justice, concluded that: ''Armenian populations were and are a people whose basic, individual and collective rights should or must be respected, in accordance with international law. The extermination of Armenian populations through deportation and massacre is an imprescriptible crime of genocide—genocide, Mr. Speaker—within the meaning of the convention of December 9, 1948''.

The international law has spoken and the official opposition has taken its responsibilities. It is up to this government to show the integrity and the courage expected of it.

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I much appreciated, of course, the remarks of my colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve. I commend him on so aptly reminding us of the importance of designating correctly by the term ''genocide'' what the Liberal government considers as a tragedy experienced by the Armenian people in 1915 and 1916.

I would like to recall what I said this morning and I will put a question to my colleague along the lines—

Mr. Ménard: And friend.

Mr. Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): And friend, notwithstanding, as he reminds me.

I was saying this morning that there was an urgent need, with respect to Canada's role internationally, its role in the defence of rights and freedoms, not only to have consistent discourse, but not to leave room for any interpretation that would tend, in the view of humanity and of other countries, to diminish the importance Canada accords to human rights.

When one looks at the amendment presented by the Liberal government to this opposition motion, one might well ask some serious questions. As my colleague has just mentioned, this is a way to play down the seriousness of a completely reprehensible act and almost to invite a certain tolerance of this type of event.

If we want human rights to be respected internationally, we must send a clear message, because any departure from this line of conduct will certainly have repercussions at home. As I have said, if Canada shows a form of tolerance for what should be condemned, sooner or later we will find ourselves in a similar

situation. The danger is there. If we are less vigilant at home, it is our fellow citizens who will suffer.

I am going to put my question to my colleague, because I know that many people would like to hear him again. It concerns human rights and international trade. I ask the question very seriously. I would like my colleague to tell us what he himself thinks of this: To what extent can a government make compromises, dishonest compromises, in order to establish or maintain trade relations with a country to the detriment of human rights?

Mr. Ménard: Mr. Speaker, you are surely as fond as I of the hon. member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, and his questions, each one more brilliant than the last. Without a doubt the answer is one you would give yourself, Mr. Speaker, that there must be assurance that, in any circumstances, profit motives such as international trade must not take precedence over any permissiveness in the area of human rights violations. I believe that there has been sufficient unanimity today in this House for me to state that we recognize that international trade is a very important dimension of international life. We recognize that the history of Canada has been built on trade, but this must never lead us to neglect the vital importance of promoting human rights, as the Liberals have since they formed the government in October 1993.

• (1620)

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share my time with the member for Scarborough—Rouge River.

We must see the debate we are having today in its historical context. I am supporting this motion and I am supporting the amendment proposed by the parliamentary secretary.

The amendment seeks to place this human tragedy within its historical context and at the same time to place it in the context of what we as Canadians must do to recognize the historical reality of what has happened in this world in light of today's interdependent world in which we live and what we must do as active politicians both nationally and internationally to ensure these events do not occur again.

That is the purpose of the government's motion. That is the purpose of the debate. I congratulate the Bloc Quebecois on bringing forward this motion because I think it is important.

However, it is unfortunate the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve has suggested the government in proposing this amendment is trying to mix up this issue with commercial relations and other interests with Turkey. That is not the purpose of this amendment, as I read it. Before I consider this issue I will provide some general observations on this matter.

This was an enormous human tragedy. It fits within the context of other great tragedies, of killings of populations. There were those in Germany, Cambodia, Rwanda. Unfortunately the list in this century is all too long. For that reason it is important to have this recognition. A question we all must ask in the complicated world in which we live, a question posed in the New Testament, is who is my neighbour?

The neighbour of yesterday were Armenians and the neighbour of a nearer yesterday was the Jewish population of Europe. The neighbours of a recent time were those in Cambodia. The neighbours of a more recent time were those in Rwanda and in Bosnia.

If we lose sight of our common humanity we lose sight of what we are here to do as politicians. In so doing, we must not lose sight that we operate within a historical continuum, a historical framework and an institutional framework. It behoves us as members of Parliament to ensure it operates in this modern world. That is the reason I support the amendment.

We need international institutions. We need a United Nations system, which the parliamentary secretary spoke of. I am proud to support the government, which has been actively pursuing a United Nations system which will ensure this does not happen again. Our troops are in Bosnia in support of the reason the government believes genocide should not be allowed to occur.

It is not right for the Bloc Quebecois to say the government does not wish to address the issue of genocide. We are committing the resources of Canada, much to the criticism of the Reform Party, to ensure the stability of places in the world, to ensure this type of event cannot occur again. We have committed troops to Haiti to ensure this will not happen again. These are concrete measures which address this problem and which we must deal with. That is one aspect of the problem.

Another is the aspect of an institutional framework of world government. We lack a legal system which would enable us to say that such and such a group is guilty of genocide and the ability to punish and deal with it. We are reaching toward that. It is still in an embryonic position.

• (1625)

This issue was debated at Nuremberg. When I taught public international law I taught the Nuremberg trials as establishing principles of international law. One must recognize those principles were forged at the end of the second world war by the victorious parties and imposed on the losing party in the conflict and as a result lack that universality which has subsequently developed since the second world war. We in Canada have played

our part in developing those principles which we can now look to for protecting human rights.

My colleague, Professor Humphreys at McGill University, was one of the drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thousands of Canadians have by their actions, in military actions such as IFOR and other military actions I spoke of earlier and in less dramatic situations, working at the United Nations, working in international commissions, sought to develop rules of law which will enable us to deal with the issue before us today.

We must develop that issue. We must develop an international criminal court. I wish the Bloc Quebecois would address that issue. What lesson can we take from Armenia? The lesson that we must take is that we need international institutions, legal institutions which can deal with these issues.

These are the things which modern Armenians and modern Turks and modern Canadians will thank us for, not seeking to condemn and turn a question of language into something which looks like a form of a political manoeuvre when what we all are trying to do is address an issue which is of real distinct importance to every member of the House, which is how to craft modern institutions which respond to the needs of a modern world and can assure that this type of event can never happen again.

I hope the criminal court which has been established in respect of Bosnia and which a learned judge from my province has joined as a prosecutor will contribute toward that process. I hope we might in the House one day debate the possibility of having similar laws as they have in the United States where civil actions may be brought in the courts of the United States based on human rights violations elsewhere.

We have much work to do as parliamentarians. We should attend to that work. The parliamentary secretary said in all frankness to the question asked of him about Turkey that he could not answer what Turkey would say on the issue of genocide. That is for Turkey to answer.

We can answer for ourselves about what we believe in terms of the institutional framework of the world in which we operate and what we can do as politicians to ensure terrible tragedies of this nature do not occur.

That will be the greatest contribution we can make to our fellow Armenian citizens and those Armenians living in Armenia today. That is the greatest means whereby we can show our respect for the meaning of this resolution, by not seeking to argue about the terminology of it, recognizing it as a fact and turning our attention to ensuring this can never happen again, or at least if it does happen that there is a world order in place which will enable us as Canadians to participate in that and prevent it.

There is a complicated subject to raise, but something I think is worth saying in the House. Every issue of this nature has a resonance within ourselves. We are not perfect in this country. We have had our problems, human rights problems. We have evolved and will continue to evolve in respect of it. We have developed a country with a charter of rights which guarantees individual rights. That is an extremely important part of our tradition and our contribution to the international framework of which I spoke.

We have developed federal institutions which respond to the needs of collectivities in different parts of the country which have control over those events which are close to them and at the same time a federal government which assures the charter and general rules and principles may be applied equally and fairly across this land.

I look at that and at what we have crafted over the years. Our federal institutions are among the best guarantees Canadians have that this type of event could never occur here. Remember, this occurred in a unitary state that lacked the checks and balances of many jurisdictions which could deal with this type of issue.

• (1630)

Therefore, I suggest to members of the Bloc Quebecois that when they bring forward a motion like this and want to know the lesson of the Armenian tragedy, that one lesson is the creation of modern political institutions with human values and with sufficient responses to the needs to deal with them. That is what I suggest has been done in our federal institutions and it is one reason why this country is so respected and why it is a great country in which to live. It is respected by everyone.

[*Translation*]

I know that my time is limited. I would like to say in closing that the amendment proposed by the government is not only consistent with the Bloc Quebecois' basic motion but it also introduces the much broader notion that respect for human rights must enjoy universal recognition. This respect also introduces the notion that our country is based on tolerance and multiculturalism. It is a federal state that guarantees respect for all its citizens, whether they come from Armenia or any other country.

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to commend my colleague from Rosedale for his comments. Had his remarks led to the tabling of a motion, I would support it almost in its entirety, except of course when he refers—I understand that he may have to toe the party line—to his support for the amendment put forward by his colleague, the Secretary of State responsible for Multiculturalism and the Status of Women.

In fact, as we mentioned several times, the government's amendment to this motion plays down the impact of the tragic events experienced by the Armenian people in 1915-16, thus

managing to avoid calling a spade a spade and referring to those events as a genocide.

I understand that the evolution of international law and attitudes certainly allows us to be more specific in analyzing such events. It seems to me that, even when referring to the 1915-16 context, the facts can only point to a recognition that a real or at least attempted genocide of the Armenian people took place at that time.

I fully agree that what my colleague said about Canada's human rights record should be acknowledged. Both the international community and the official opposition recognize outright that Canada's human rights record is quite good. Last week, the Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission testified before the committee on human rights to point out the major improvements needed with regard to the First Nations and, of course, the need to add sexual orientation to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination. Having said that, I recognize, we recognize that there are advantages to living in this country as far as human rights are concerned.

But precisely because of the progress made in Canada and Quebec in terms of human rights, I think the international message we are trying to convey should not, as I mentioned, be watered down in any way.

• (1635)

That is why we must send a clear message with regard not only to the Armenian genocide but also to the other crimes against humanity being committed around the world. Can my colleague tell us to what extent Canada must compromise because of international trade and set aside human rights in favour of Canada's commercial interests?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I would ask for the co-operation of the hon. member for Rosedale in giving us a short answer in the few moments remaining in the period set aside for questions and comments.

Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, I have two comments for my hon. colleague. First of all, I too am delighted to be living in a system in which the human rights commissioner can raise such issues and bring them to our attention. I agree with the hon. member when he says that we Canadians still a long way to go. Instead of always pointing an accusing finger at others, we should start by dealing with our own problems. I am very pleased to be sitting in this place, because I look forward to be doing just that with him and the other members of this House in the near future.

Regarding the relationship between international trade and human rights in other countries, do we really want, given the total system we live in, to condemn others? Does condemnation foster understanding and behaviour modification in other people or not? That is what we must ask ourselves.

It may well be that, in some cases, condemnation is absolutely necessary, while in others, maintaining a relationship with the people in question will give us the opportunity to convince them to change their minds. This must always be decided on a case by case, or ad hoc basis.

This is why I find that the amendment moved by the minister is more in keeping with today's needs than the wording of the original motion. This is why I support these amendments and hope that they will receive the support of all members of this House, because it is in that spirit that we will be able to change people's ways. This should be our aim. W should think ahead, and have the future of mankind in mind. I think that this is what we are trying to do with these amendments.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Before resuming debate, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as following: the hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka—FEDNOR; the hon. member for Davenport—Fisheries.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to participate in the debate on the motion proposed by the official opposition.

The theme is man's inhumanity to man, an exhortation that we set aside a time every year to take note of this unfortunate subject. The subscript on the theme is the Armenian genocide of 1915.

Some amendments have been proposed by the government and by the third party dealing with technical aspects of the resolution and exhibiting some caution in terms of the use of the word ''genocide.''

Perhaps some of us are looking for ways to finesse the use of these historical facts, bring them into the present and find the proper pigeonhole, the proper categorization, the proper way to try to articulate it. I think there is some difficulty in doing that. Members on both sides of the House have articulated various perspectives on the difficulty. It is not easy to articulate events which happened a long time ago, in this case 81 years ago.

• (1640)

In any event, I have made up my mind. I made up my mind some time ago. I do not care about the technical aspects of this. I will leave that to others. Frankly, after 81 years we are at the point where the lawyers have become irrelevant.

I first became aware of what is being called the Armenian genocide about 12 years ago. I had an Armenian Canadian friend. He certainly did not become my friend to make me aware of the issue. However, in knowing his family I became aware of it.

About the same time I had the occasion to read an academic article in a British magazine of political philosophy and history. That magazine is called ''Encounter''. It was a well written and objective presentation of many aspects of history and political philosophy.

The article that I read was quite objective. It dealt with the then existing historical controversy about the issue of how many people actually died in the Armenian genocide. At the time, and perhaps still, there are conflicting views on the number. However it is measured, we are dealing with six or seven digits. However it is measured, it was, at least, a tragedy. It was the first genocide of this century. I have accepted that.

Irrespective of the vote on the motion and how the lawyers amend it, dovetail it and finesse it, I want Canadians to recognize what happened in 1915.

Since that time I have attended the annual commemoration of the April 1915 events. Everyone will know that the perpetrators were incapable of killing 1.5 million people on April 24, 1915. It went on for some time. At the time the world was engaged in another slaughter, the first world war. Millions were killed in that exercise. It happened at the same time that Lawrence of Arabia was pursuing his military career, perhaps 100 miles south of where this was happening. The world did not pay too much attention.

However, there were those who took note. I am pleased to say that there were those in Canada who took note. About 1921 some Canadians got together to bring to Canada some orphans of the Armenian genocide. Those orphans came to be known as the Georgetown boys. They were brought to a place near Georgetown, Ontario. While by present day standards it does not look too pretty, these orphans were parcelled out and taken to farms. They were not adopted. They had guardians. They were sent to school and they worked very hard on farms. Recently there was a commemoration of them by the Armenian community in Toronto which I attended. It was very moving.

These people are now very old. Most of them had smiles. However, the wrinkles in their hands and faces showed me something very real that happened 81 years ago.

• (1645)

We can all pick whatever term we like on this, tragedy, genocide, but all of us cannot help but pause and ask how this could have happened and to ask God not to let it happen again.

Following that, for the Armenians of that part of the Middle East and eastern Europe there was a diaspora. Those who were able to flee did. Those who were deported moved on. Somewhere between a few and many found their way, thankfully, to Canada, with the Armenian community regarding itself as a minority within Canada. Many of them have been mainstreamed, leading lives not so much as Armenian-Canadians but as Canadians of Armenian heritage.

However, one cannot forget that a huge chunk of people, part of one's heritage, was simply liquidated by a political entity, the Ottoman Empire. I was not alive during the time of the Ottoman Empire so I do not know what it was. I can read about it in the history books but I cannot reach back and touch it as part of history. However, those who survived those events have told me they happened. It is more than past due for the rest of the world to recognize it as it really was.

We should not leave this event alone in history without recognizing that man has on numerous occasions killed just as many in this century. There was the first world war, the Russian revolution which killed millions, and the genocidal German concentration camps which killed millions of Jews, Gypsies and political opponents.

We were a party to the second world war during which millions were killed. The Chinese Communist revolution was not a genocide but millions died. There was a massive slaughter of military personnel and civilians in Yugoslavia immediately following the first world war.

In the partition in India in 1947-48, two million people were killed trying to draw a line between India and Pakistan. It was a terrible tragedy. No one willed that one; it was man's inhumanity to man.

Just since I have had the privilege of serving as a member of Parliament, we have had the ugliness of the slaughter in Bosnia and in Rwanda.

This motion today is not just an attempt to recognize what happened in Armenia in 1915. It is an attempt by all Canadians to reconcile inside themselves with what has happened here, these tragedies, this death, these inhumanities. We have very little else we can use to help us reconcile inside ourselves. This resolution is one of the ways we can do it as a people.

We also wish, if we can, to reconcile ourselves with history. In this case it is my view the history books do not show exactly what happened. Maybe some do. Forgive me for not being able to read all the books and articles on this. However, in my experience as a Canadian and with my education I did not have access and was not made aware of the extent of this slaughter as I went through my schooling, as I was privileged to do for many years. I regret that we do not in a dedicated and comprehensive way try to make our students aware of some of these aspects of history.

• (1650)

I do not think we should be too partisan about the 1.5 million dead. I hope there is a way the opposition motion, the government amendment and the subamendment from the third party will resolve this in a unanimously adopted motion. It would be difficult

for anyone to vote against a motion when we are looking down a gun barrel at this many dead.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for his fine intervention.

In the House on many occasions we have discussed genocides which have taken place around the world, from Armenia to Cambodia to the tragedies in Rwanda and Burundi.

Time after time we have said it is unfortunate, a tragedy, it is sad. What have we done to prevent genocide in the future?

I ask my hon. friend if he has any ideas on what the Canadian government could do and what he is prepared to do to intervene with the Minister of Foreign Affairs to make some constructive suggestions on how Canada can work with its partners in the international community to put forth ideas on collective actions that can be taken to prevent genocides.

Mr. Lee: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I resist the urge to be too philosophical about a proposed solution. I am sure all members of the House are prepared to do what they can as legislators to advance Canada's role in the international arena in a way that would hopefully obviate the need to address these kinds of tragedies in the future.

I am compelled to recall a remark to me by a legislator of the Indian Parliament. In a conversation we were having about another issue he said you can only address the politics of a gun with a gun. This to me means that if there is a potential genocide or a slaughter by a machete or a gun or poisons the only way to deal with it is with force. That means the United Nations, of which Canada is a member, must pay more attention to the proposal of a rapid reaction force. That means using a gun against a gun, a blade against a blade.

If we want to sit around and be philosophical about why these things should not happen for the next half century we may end up watching another Rwanda or Cambodia without the means to stop it. We will end up simply wringing our hands.

The only short run solution to stop these things when they begin to brew is a rapid reaction force that will use force with prejudice for the purpose of ending what may appear to be a genocidal initiative.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Daviault (Ahuntsic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of his reply to my colleague's question, the hon. member referred to the symbolism of today's motion. I am a bit shocked because, to me, this is much more than a symbol.

• (1655)

One of the first things that struck me when I started working on the commemoration of the Armenian genocide was what Adolf Hitler, when he started his exactions from the Jews, asked the SS: ''Who remembers the Armenian genocide nowadays?''

The first measure that a country must take when a genocide occurs is to make sure that it is not forgotten. The dictators of this world must be reminded that such atrocities will be taken into consideration by the international community. This is why Bloc Quebecois members and Reformers wish to keep the term genocide in the motion.

The word tragedy is not as strong. I ask the hon. member to reflect on the very nature of the motion and to support it because of its purpose, which is to make reference to the Armenian genocide and to be a concrete action whereby the government will remind the international community of such acts, which are all too common.

This is meant to be a comment. I would like to hear the hon. member's views on this.

[*English*]

Mr. Lee: Mr. Speaker, I agree with almost all of what the member said. I congratulate him on introducing the motion. If somehow in the translation the word symbolic came across in my remarks, I do not recall using it or at least intending it. I do not consider there is anything symbolic in this at all. It means what it says.

In terms of how the voting goes on the motions and the technical words, I have already made my point that I do not want to be into the technical side of this at all. I made up my mind long ago about what went on 81 years ago. I simply want a resolution of the House that is effective for the very well intentioned purpose of the member opposite.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the official opposition day on the Armenian genocide affords me the opportunity to speak on this most important matter. The debates surrounding this question are aimed at encouraging the Canadian government to officially recognize the genocide of 1915. This crime against humanity is, we believe, something that must not be left in the shadows to be ignored.

The motion presented by the Bloc Quebecois stipulates that, on this 81st anniversary of the genocide, the government ought to designate the week of April 20 to 27 of each year as the week to commemorate man's inhumanity to man, acknowledging that the actions in question are to be strongly condemned and all people on earth are to bear witness to them.

In fact, the Bloc motion essentially reflects the spirit of a motion tabled by the Liberal member for Don Valley North in April of 1995. Unfortunately, some of his colleagues opposed it, and the motion was not put to a vote in the House at that time.

It would have provided the government with another feather in its cap as a defender of human rights. Instead, we are faced with an astonishing about face.

The Liberal government's attitude in this matter is disappointing, but not really a surprise. When the Liberals were in the opposition benches, they did not hesitate to call for explicit recognition of the Armenian genocide by this House. Since they have returned to power, they have completely changed their tune, you might say. Human rights are no longer necessarily a priority, but are often subordinate to economic interests.

• (1700)

Just recently, the brand new Minister of International Cooperation was pressuring the mayor of Montreal to abandon his plans to erect a monument to the victims of genocide, including the Armenian people. The minister would have preferred ''tragic events'' to be used instead of the term ''genocide''. Watering down the concept in such a context is tantamount to confirming that the final step in a genocide is to attempt after the fact to deny its very existence, or at the very least to minimize its importance, and that is what we are seeing here today.

This is what the Liberal government is again trying to do, by proposing an amendment in an undignified attempt to water down the seriousness of the situation. If it refused to support the motion of my friend and colleague from Ahuntsic, the Liberal government would be implicitly supporting the extremists who wish to stifle historical memory. This in no way reflects the fundamental values of Quebecers and Canadians.

Fortunately, the governments of Quebec and Ontario have long supported the universal values human rights represent. In 1980, they both adopted motions recognizing the Armenian genocide and demanding that the federal government follow suit.

It is incongruous that, 16 years later, here we are still in this House calling for the Canadian government to act. Does the federal government refuse to recognize this reality? During World War I, the Ottoman Turk government committed atrocities against the Armenian people.

The Ottoman Empire executed one and a half million Armenians and deported another 500,000. And what is especially sad is that many people are keeping this situation hidden.

If we want to avoid impunity one day inciting other peoples to similar actions, and, unfortunately, we have more recent examples still fresh in our minds, Parliament must today recognize that the genocide of the Armenian community is one of this century's major tragedies. We must avoid euphemisms at all cost and give words their due in keeping with the events that occurred. As the proverb has it, ''An idea well conceived presents itself clearly, and the words to express it come readily''.

When things are described as they are and international pressure is brought to bear, one day soon, Turkey will take responsibility for this genocide. We must not close our eyes to such crimes and allow the passage of time to bury them.

The government's position on human rights, as I said earlier, is disappointing. For the present government, trade and export are all that count. Foreign affairs and business affairs go hand in hand, and the rights of the individual are being muddled with the rights of the businessman.

The Liberal government is so obsessed by the simple rationality of money and trade that it forgets the vital element and has to be reminded of it by the Canadian Exporters' Association. At a conference organized by the international centre for human rights, the president of the exporters' association pointed out that international trade and efforts to increase respect for human rights were not mutually exclusive and that the government should seriously pursue both. He also added that business should voluntarily adopt rules of conduct for activities abroad.

Finally, and this is what counts, he pointed out that international trade and investments alone did not bring about improved respect for human rights. This is from the Canadian Exporters' Association. And yet, the Prime Minister has been endlessly repeating the opposite ever since he came to power. The world is on its ear.

The government's priorities in this area do not reflect the values shared by Quebecers and Canadians.

• (1705)

In a recent poll, Canadians and Quebecers were asked to rank the various objectives of Canada's foreign policy according to their importance. Fifty three per cent of Quebecers and 48 per cent of Canadians said that the protection of human rights was very important.

In Quebec the protection of human rights was deemed more important than the promotion of trade. Fortunately, the peoples of Quebec and Canada are much more compassionate toward victims of terror than their government.

These values shared by the peoples of Quebec and Canada as a whole are universal values which can be found in the universal charter of human rights. They must be reflected in Canada's international policies. The values of equality, justice and respect for fundamental rights transcend culture, language, continents and even time.

It would be too easy, for instance, to keep trading with China without uttering a word regarding its shameful record of human rights violations. I refuse to believe that the Chinese are marginally more inclined to live under dictatorial rule or that their culture makes it easier for them to do so.

Along the same line, we cannot endorse the idea that women are second class citizens, just because they are women, and view this as normal, because local religious beliefs.

Another case in point: the Canadian government must react when trading with a country where young children work in appalling conditions. The government has the moral duty to promote and protect human rights. This is one of the main reasons for its international involvement.

As a Montreal journalist said last week: ''Finally, this issue raises—and I believe it is of the utmost importance—the question of the universality of rights. Are relativism and piecemeal policy, which are the essence of politics and diplomacy, not being taken too far when we hear major western leaders preach the relativity of universal values?'' This is the crux of the matter. It has also been said that it was a very popular theme with despots in Africa and Asia''.

To conclude, I would urge my colleagues to support the motion brought forward by the member for Ahuntsic to set aside a week to commemorate man's inhumanity to man. This way, every year we would have the opportunity to remember the errors of the past, and to offer on the international stage an image of Canada reflecting the values of the peoples of Quebec and Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a question of the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River. I also want to ask the same question of my colleague from the Bloc Quebecois. It is with regard to what is taught in school regarding the history of genocide and the holocaust.

Before I do that, I want to make a statement. Since 1965, or 31 years, I have been involved with this issue. This is the first time we have had seven hours debate and the word ''alleged'' has not been used. I give credit to this House and members of Parliament for not using the word ''alleged'' in the discussions we have had so for.

I want to make the point that nobody has ever denied the fact that 1.5 million innocent people perished in 1915 during the first world war as the first genocide of the century.

I am quite sure that Armenians in this country and all over the world are prepared to do as the Jewish people did after the holocaust. Once this issue is addressed by the Turkish government they are prepared to forgive what happened but never to forget what happened. Once you forget it will be repeated again. I hope this debate will focus attention on the fact that the victims these days are prepared to forgive if they are asked but they will not forget. Once we forget we repeat it again in the future.

• (1710)

I go back to the first point I made. Would the hon. member encourage including the subject of genocide, or crimes against humanity, or however it is described, a tragic event, massacres, as part of the school curriculum so the younger generations can be taught in the high schools what happened? Awareness is the key. Once they are aware of what happened in history hopefully they will not repeat it because that is where the problem is. Once it happens it repeats itself over and over again.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Debien: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. member for Don Valley North for his question and comments.

As you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, I fully support most of his comments, except for one. He said no one had denied or refused to acknowledge the Armenian genocide. He said no one had denied this event, and I totally agree with him. The hon. member's statement, however, raises the following question: If no one denies it, why refuse to give it official recognition? That is what I cannot understand on the part of Liberal members.

As for his second question concerning what is taught in the history books in Quebec and Canada about the genocides that have taken place throughout the world, I also fully agree with him. Being an educator who taught for many years mostly at the primary level, I obviously think that, in terms of giving students a sense of history, of collective conscience, it is very important to teach them about all these tragic errors, all these genocides that have been committed throughout the world, to give them this sense of history, this collective conscience so that, once they become adults, they, too, will exert pressure on their governments to ensure that such mistakes are not repeated.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I must admit that it is very difficult for me to speak on the motion put forward by my hon. colleague, the member for Ahuntsic. It is not that I disagree with what it says, quite the contrary, but the subject is so terribly sad.

If I have agreed to participate in the debate today, it is because I believe that the events referred to in this motion must never be forgotten by present or future generations.

Who has not heard about the violence and mistreatment inflicted upon the Armenian people in the early part of this century? The violence was such that the word genocide, as defined by the United Nations in 1948, can be used without hesitation. And I believe that any amount of manoeuvring to avoid using the word genocide would be sheer deception or hypocrisy.

In a nutshell, genocide means the systematic and purposeful extermination of entire groups of people, whether ethnic, national

or religious. There is no doubt that the Armenian people were the victims of a genocide. As painful as it may be, it is therefore necessary to remember the tragic events which started on April 24, 1915. On that day, the Armenian genocide, the first genocide of our century and one of the most important in terms of number of victims, started in what was known at the time as the Ottoman Empire.

In ensuing years, more than 1.5 million innocent victims will be murdered or deported for reasons that remain unclear, their temples and monuments destroyed and the names of their towns changed. They even tried to wipe away all mention of their very existence.

• (1715)

All this simply could not be a series of coincidences. It had to be a carefully planned and methodically executed plan. The Bloc Quebecois believes that humanity must be constantly reminded of the Armenian genocide. Why? So that this type of orchestrated violence against our fellow human beings can never occur again.

We may sometimes think that a genocide is a rare occurrence, that it is a thing of the past. Unfortunately, it is still current practice. We cannot and must not forget that, since 1915, many leaders on this planet ordered radical, extremist and immoral measures carried out. The excessive number of genocides that have occurred since then clearly demonstrates this fact.

How can we forget the fate of the Jews and gypsies at the hands of Hitler's regime? How can we forget the fate of the Cambodian people at the hands of the Khmers Rouges, in 1975? How can we forget the fate, in 1994, of more than 500,000 Tutsi, in Rwanda? How can we forget the ethnic cleansing of civilian populations in the former Yugoslavia? How can we forget the fate of the Tibetan population at the hands of the Chinese occupant? How can we forget the reign of terror imposed by Indonesia in East Timor? The list goes on and on.

These few examples, already far too numerous, are most revealing. Millions of people have been assassinated, while millions of others were deported, and are refugees, without a country and without a family. According to the UNHCR, over 27 million individuals currently live outside their country because they had to flee war and repression. These 27 million persons are refugees, in a century that is said to be modern.

It is with horror that, every day, we witness barbaric and inhumane practices that we thought were history. Will the human race ever learn from its mistakes? What is surprising regarding these genocides and their consequences is that, all too often, their authors are never punished. They act with complete impunity. But who is responsible for these deaths? Who is responsible for this suffering?

Given its magnitude, a genocide cannot be the work of mere individuals. The participation, or at least the consent, of government leaders is necessary.

Too frequently in the past, those responsible for these genocides have gone unpunished. A laudable effort is now under way and we can only rejoice in the creation of the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague. This tribunal, created in 1993 by the UN Security Council and responsible for judging crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia, is a step in the right direction, particularly because, in 1995, another international tribunal was created, this time to judge crimes that took place in Rwanda.

These two courts are still in their early days. It is to be hoped that they will soon have real means of rendering justice. In the former Yugoslavia, over fifty charges have been laid, including charges against Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic. But a large problem remains and is experienced in the same way in both the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. This problem is related to the impossibility of actually laying hands on the criminals, who put themselves under the protection of governments or take refuge in other countries.

War crimes must not, and should never, go unpunished. The international community, including Canada, has a legal and moral obligation to find the criminals. Some will even say that the international tribunal should be able to count on the assistance of an international police force with the power to apprehend suspects wherever they are.

For the time being, the Bloc Quebecois reiterates an opinion it expressed at the time of the Dayton peace accords. The International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague must continue its efforts and judge war criminals. It is important that the tribunal retain its autonomy and that its mandate not be hampered by any amnesties negotiated and granted by the parties in question. Bargaining to have sentences dropped and pardons granted to criminals accused of genocide should not be allowed.

We know that Canada has for a long time been considered one of the world leaders in promoting and protecting human rights. This excellent reputation did not come about simply through the importance accorded to trade.

• (1720)

This enviable reputation is the result of the priorities set by former prime ministers such as Lester B. Pearson, awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957 for having initiated the creation of United Nations peacekeeping forces, and John Diefenbaker, who constantly defended human rights, particularly by taking a stand in 1961 against apartheid in South Africa.

Today, the Bloc Quebecois feels it is high time for the House of Commons to finally recognize the Armenian genocide. If the

motion is rejected, this will confirm our gravest doubts about the real importance the Liberal majority assigns to human rights as an issue. It is not because Canada maintains profitable trade ties with Turkey that we need to close our eyes to a historical reality.

As far back as 1980, the Ontario legislature recognized the Armenian genocide. The Quebec national assembly followed suit in 1985. This past year, in April 1995, the Russian parliament also recognized it. What is the Liberal majority here waiting for?

Even if we often have the impression that money, productivity, and trade are what rules our lives, we must not lose sight of the fact that other values must be taken into consideration when looking at trade relations with other countries. As markets become global, it is important to ensure the respect of human rights.

Since their arrival in power, the Liberals have been thinking they can drift along on Canada's excellent reputation abroad in order to put the emphasis on strictly trade relations. In April 1994 in this House, the Prime Minister himself claimed that his government had a policy to protect human rights and raised the issue in every country it traded with. However, Team Canada's latest trip to Asia revealed just how little importance the Liberal government pays to human rights.

It took a 13 year old youth, Craig Kielburger, to accost the Prime Minister in India and finally bring to light the sad truth of the lack of respect of the fundamental rights of children. This young man's cause immediately caught the sympathy of Quebecers and Canadians thus proving that our fellow citizens are concerned by this important issue of human rights.

This is why the Bloc, like all Quebecers and Canadians, wants all people to be able to grow and develop on this planet without fear of threat to their life and liberty in any way. This is why we must act to prevent the government, through its silence, from becoming a partisan and an accomplice of the indifference and individualism that all too often seem to have become the prerogative of this century.

Governments must sometimes be called to order on the issue of basic human rights. The House of Commons and the government members must take special action to make sure that the Armenian genocide is not forgotten, contrary to all the other acts of violence committed against innocent civilian populations.

This is why I support with all the might and fervour I can muster the motion asking that every year the period of time between April 20 and 27 be set aside to commemorate man's occasional inhumanity to man. Even if it is sometimes easier to forget past events and to chose to plough on, the House of Commons and the Liberal majority must officially recognize the genocide of 1915 to avoid the reoccurrence of tragedies of this kind.

In closing, I would like to salute all our fellow citizens of Armenian origin in their beautiful tongue.

[*The member spoke in Armenian.*]

[*English*]

Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Ahuntsic for bringing this motion to the attention of the House. The issues raised are far reaching and universal.

History has not focused its brutality. Its cruelty has not been limited to one community or to one people. The tragedies of history have not discriminated on the basis of race, religion or ethnicity for they befell humanity as a whole. The deaths of innocent men, women and children, cut down by tyranny because of their ethnicity, their religion or their race is a tragedy for the entire human family.

● (1725)

Canadians need to be sensitive to this reality and recognize that the individual histories of many of our citizens do not begin on our shores. We must be sensitive to the experiences of our fellow Canadians who by birth or by ancestry may have been victimized by the inhumanity of wars and oppression.

By being compassionate and understanding of the deep scars that such experiences have on individuals and communities, we are contributing to the healing process. While our actions today help ease the pain, we must know that the scars will never be erased.

We are, by and large, a country of immigrants who have come to Canada from every corner of the world. As immigrants we have attachments to our respective heritages. In Canada we take pride in the fact that these diverse heritages are what makes Canada unique as a nation.

We seek to build a society that ensures fair and equitable treatment and that respects the dignity and accommodates the needs of Canadians of all ethnic, cultural, religious, linguistic and racial origins. The challenge for us now is to strengthen a cohesive, respectful, inclusive and democratic society and a shared sense of identity reflective of the diversity of Canada's people.

What makes a society cohesive? Three pillars in my mind: social justice, civic participation and a sense of identity. How do we create a cohesive society that incorporates these three principles?

First, we offer to all Canadians, regardless of their ethnicity, colour or religion, the opportunity to contribute to society and enjoy the full benefits of participation.

Second, we ensure that Canadians of all backgrounds are able to participate in society. To foster this very important symbiotic relationship requires Canadians to work hard.

Our Canadian mosaic means that we must be accommodating in ways that other nations feel free to ignore. We have built a strong tradition of respecting each other's cultures, of understanding how diversity enriches us. We work with many partners across the country to accomplish this. We work with other levels of government, with major institutions, with organizations, business and labour and with individual Canadians to make sure that we all have the opportunity to participate fully in society.

Why do we go to this trouble? What is our incentive? We do it because when Canadians are treated equally and fairly, when they feel they belong and when they have the opportunity to contribute, we are ensuring our future growth and prosperity. We do it because Canada in its diversity is a mirror for the rest of the world. We dare hope that other nations who see themselves reflected in our diversity will be persuaded to follow us toward peace, understanding and justice for all.

From our beginnings as a country, diversity has been a fact of the every day lives of Canadians. The issue is not whether we are culturally diverse—there is no question about that—but rather how we intend to make sure that our diversity continues to strengthen us as a nation.

Even today as religious and ethnic conflicts take their toll around the globe, Canada has been a light of democratic resolution of profound political difference. We have been a beacon to displaced people from around the world who recognize what racism, prejudice and ignorance can lead to. We are an example of respect and accommodation that has been far too lacking in other parts of the world.

Our efforts in this regard have been recognized by Nelson Mandela, president of the Republic of South Africa. In his message to Canadians, President Mandela referred to Canada's lasting tradition of dedication to human rights and hoped that our efforts would continue to ''enrich humanity''.

With this very desire in mind, the government remains committed to the multiculturalism policy built on the pillars of identity, civic participation and social justice. These are the cherished principles of democracy that are the best deterrents to tyranny and oppression. These are the values that bind all Canadians as a nation.

While the pace of change may be challenging or even frightening, we want to ensure that all who call Canada home are able to take full and active part in the affairs of their community and country, that Canadians are valued for their individual contributions, for their value as human beings and not judged by their membership in any number of identifiable communities.

• (1730)

So by all means, Canadians, remember who you are and where you came from, but do not forget that Canada's future lies ahead of us and that its creation depends on how well we work together.

We are a diverse society. We will remain a diverse society. Our job is to make that diversity work for all of us. It is this compassionate vision of our community that has and will continue to make Canada a beacon to victims of violence and oppression from around the world.

April 24 is an emotional day for Canadians of Armenian ancestry as they recall the very painful and tragic events of the past. The Canadian government has consistently extended its heartfelt sense of sorrow on this difficult occasion.

However, the motion as presented does not reflect accurately Canada's position. The Government of Canada does not deny the tragic events that befell the Armenian community. Indeed, it sympathizes with the victims of the tragic events of 1915 and with their descendants, particularly those who have come to Canada to make a new life.

In memory of the victims of inhumanity: Armenians, Jews, Bosnians, Cambodians, aboriginal peoples, gay men and lesbians and people of colour, I urge the House to support the amendment proposed earlier by the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism.

In the government's recognition that we must be ever vigilant in our defence of the values we share as Canadians, it is this government's commitment to never forget and to work toward reconciliation and understanding.

Mr. Tony Ianno (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to rise today to speak to the motion presented by the member for Ahuntsic with regard to the commemoration of the Armenian genocide.

The member for Ahuntsic should remember that my colleague from Don Valley North introduced a private member's motion, Motion No. 282, on April 3, 1995. That motion, on which incidentally the member opposite spoke in favour, was a motion which called for the designation of the week of April 20 to 27 each year to commemorate the issue of man's inhumanity to his fellow man.

In speaking to that motion, which read:

> That, in the opinion of this House, the government should designate the period from April 20 to 27 of each year as the week in which we commemorate the issue of man's inhumanity to his fellow man, to remind Canadians that the use of genocide and violence as an instrument of national policy by any nation or group at any time is a crime against all mankind which must be condemned and not forgotten.

I have deliberately chosen to speak to this issue of man's inhumanity to his fellow man during the week that we remember the tragedy of the Armenian genocide for one main purpose. During the years that followed, it was very difficult for many people of Armenian background to accept the genocide caused by the Turkish army and to understand why victims were whipped, clubbed and refused water as they passed by streams and wells. These were men, women and children. The victims were lashed when they lagged behind.

Telegrams to provincial capitals captured by the British army and reports by witnesses like Henry Morgenthau, the American ambassador to Turkey, provide evidence that the extermination of the Armenians was planned and organized by the central government.

The significance of this week in relation to man's inhumanity to man does not, however, end with the commemoration of the slaughter of the 1.5 million Armenians at the hands of the Turkish authorities. April 20 to 27 was chosen because April 19 and 20, 1939 was the beginning of the holocaust committed by the Nazis against the Jewish population. April 27 was the end of the apartheid regime of South Africa which gave the South African population the right to vote, one person, one vote.

Throughout history there are terrible examples of man's inhumanity to man. There was the holocaust which included the extermination of six million Jews in various concentration camps all over Europe. The Nazis were also responsible for the death of over one million gypsies, homosexuals and other minority groups deemed unacceptable by Hitler's Third Reich. The holocaust was a denial of God and of man. It was a destruction of the world in a miniature form.

• (1735)

Hitler, and those he appointed to his imaginary government, regarded the Jewish people as a political problem and its so-called solution as a political necessity that had to be addressed in Germany's foreign and domestic policy. The Nazis used mass terror, forced labour, starvation, forced immigration, deportation and other forms of oppression to achieve their end goal, the destruction and annihilation of the Jewish people.

In 1975 after a five-year civil war, the communist Khmer Rouge gained victory and power in Cambodia. They evacuated all of the cities, including Phnom Penh, the capital whose population had swollen with almost three million refugees. All were brutally driven from the city and some were killed immediately.

Whomever Pol Pot and his small group of communist leaders regarded as potential enemies of the ideal state they wanted to build were executed. Those killed included officers of the army, government officials, intellectuals, educated and professional people such as doctors and teachers.

Communists who became victims of infighting were often interrogated before being killed. The killings varied according to regions; meaning more were killed in certain areas and during different times. The killing became more rampant just before the end of the Khmer Rouge rule in 1979.

Rwanda is another recent example of one group pitted against another, where the world's complacency allowed the slaughter of hundreds of thousands. The genocide of Rwanda began in April 1994. It was preceded by a war launched in October 1990 by the Tutsi guerrillas of the Rwanda Patriot Front against the Hutu led government.

Before this, Rwanda was already one of the poorest nations in Africa. The war's origins go back to a wave of violence from 1959 to 1966, when the Hutu overthrew the Tutsi monarchy which had ruled for centuries. About 20,000 to 100,000 Tutsi were killed in a slaughter that the British philosopher, Bertrand Russell, described as the ''most horrible and systematic massacre we have had occasion to witness since the extermination of the Jews by the Nazis''. The violence caused about 150,000 Tutsi exiles to flee to Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania and Zaire.

The recent fighting in September 1994 had begun after Rwandan president, Juvenal Habyarimana, was killed in a mysterious plane crash in April. At least 500,000 were estimated to have been killed in the massacres which has prompted a UN investigation into the charges of genocide.

The list of horrors continues with the mass deportations and the so-called ethnic cleansing that the world witnessed in the former Yugoslavia. Only now are the independent observers free to investigate. The situation is tragic now that the extent of the mass executions are coming to light.

How can we pretend to live in a civilized world when decade after decade we witness such terrible crimes? We must condemn these crimes of the past, of the present and of the future. We must do so by recognizing the Armenian genocide for what it was, not allow revisionists to rewrite history along with that of many of the other atrocities that have occurred in the world.

Canada is a tolerant nation. Over half of its population are Canadians of other origins. I believe that we live in a very tolerant society where we respect each other and we respect the rule of law. I believe that we must do something and encourage the UN to implement an all-encompassing, international instruments which codify crimes against humanity. Whenever some crime against humanity occurs it not only affects the people directly involved but also affects all of us no matter where we live.

I hope that somehow around the world we are able to encourage peace between nations in a swift manner.

● (1740)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague opposite and I conclude in the end that he thinks that the United Nations should find a way to deal with crimes against humanity.

In my opinion, there are some inconsistencies between what we are hearing today from the government side and reality.

I will remind the House that Pierre Sané, the president of Amnesty International, was in Ottawa on April 11. He spoke on the issue of human rights and trade.

I will highlight a number of points he raised. I believe he was right when he said: ''The fight to protect human rights can only be fought on a global scale otherwise it will be lost before it starts''. He added: ''In this era of globalization, the question is to know how to ensure that exchanges are not limited to goods, information and money, but also include values''.

Could my colleague opposite explain through which magical trick his Prime Minister believes that trading with countries with no regard for human rights is going to address, just like in a crystal ball, the issue of the violation of human rights? In this regard, I will remind the House that in 1994, the Prime Minister said: ''I could make resounding speeches on the issue and make headlines, but I prefer to open markets and trade; eventually, the walls will fall''. My colleague from Laval East said earlier that even the Canadian Exporters' Association is considering a voluntary code with respect to trade relations with countries that do not respect human rights.

How can the government believe that the issue of human rights will be settled as if by magic?

[*English*]

Mr. Ianno: Mr. Speaker, one makes a choice as head of government on how to deal with human rights. I believe that the Prime Minister has chosen the right vehicle.

Isolation does not accomplish the shared values that we can bring from our perspective to many peoples. Let us take China as a prime example. I believe that by increasing interaction with the Chinese and with our shared education, business and the other values that we are able to share with one another, we see that they start to get a sense of what Canada is all about and the values we have as Canadians.

I can give an example. On Saturday I met with 40 Chinese visitors that are in the union movement. They had taken a course in Canada and met with many trade unionists. They had learned a great deal in a short period of time. When I sat with them they said basically what they saw in Canada was tolerance and respect for one another. I asked: ''How do you see that helping you in China?'' The response was: ''What we saw was the partnership that occurred within Canada between labour, business and government somehow produced a sharing of goals, ideals and of course, economic value''. They realize that if those in China who are working for very low wages could improve their plight, somehow or other by showing it from the perspective of a partnership and how their enterprises would benefit by everyone sharing in the pie, they would accomplish their goal.

● (1745)

When we hear of that kind of example, and we would not have dreamed of the Chinese having union movements considering what we hear, there is hope. As long as we continue to interact and share values, ideas, education, et cetera, there will be improvement, especially when we take into account the new global economy and satellite communication. It is very difficult to consider southern China as being isolated when we take into account the fact that it receives TV signals from Hong Kong and other places. The Chinese are beginning to see how the rest of the world lives.

Sharing is what will accomplish the goal of achieving a freer society. It will also provide an opportunity for us to work toward the end of discrimination against people anywhere in the world. I strongly believe that by communication we will be able to achieve our goal.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago the world emerged from one of the bloodiest conflicts in our history. The international community got together to try to reform the structure in which nations dealt with each other to prevent that tragedy from reoccurring. Out of that catharsis came the Bretton Woods institution and the United Nations.

Unfortunately, the last 50 years has proven that we have failed to prevent genocide, we have failed to prevent conflicts from occurring and we have failed to prevent inhumane disasters. From Chechnya to Angola, from Cambodia to Rwanda, the world has been completely ineffective in preventing these wars from occurring. Rather than preventing conflict we have mired ourselves in conflict management.

Rather than talking about the Armenian genocide of 1915, about the holocaust and about Cambodia, rather than speaking of these historical events, supplicating ourselves on the ground to God and saying never again, we should use these historical tragedies to look at what is happening today in the world and what is going to happen tomorrow to prevent further conflicts and tragedy.

The conflict between North Korea and South Korea is one of the hottest potential war zones which could easily become nuclear. We see The Sudan, Rwanda and Burundi occurring again. We see Kenya and the decimation of the Kikuyu by the Kelenjin tribe in which Mr. Moi is implicitly involved. We see Nigeria and the decimation of the Ogoni people. We see China and Taiwan, which

could easily produce a conflagration that could leave millions dead. We see Tadjikistan.

We see Turkish Kurdistan where as we speak elected members in the Turkish parliament, Kurds, have been incarcerated without trial, tortured and summary executions have taken place. We see what is happening in the Middle East, the tragedy which has occurred which our Parliament has spoken out strongly against in the hope that peace can finally come to this ravaged area. It is an area where there is little hope in the future for peace to occur unless decisive action is taken.

These are the conflicts and the genocides of tomorrow. These are the issues we must deal with if we are going to prevent millions of people from dying unnecessarily and countries from being laid to waste.

• (1750)

One of the sad things I have found is that words without actions are completely useless. Rather than being a collection of mere words, I hope that today's debate will translate into definitive actions to prevent genocides from occurring in the future. If we do not do that the deaths of all the innocent people in previous genocides will be for nothing.

As I have said before in this House, we have a very difficult situation. It is difficult to prevent conflicts but it is not impossible. There are solutions we can employ and solutions in which Canada can take a leadership role.

It is easier to prevent a conflict than to deal with a conflict after it has occurred. After a conflict has occurred the seeds of future ethnic discontent, the seeds of future death, destruction and war are laid out for generations to come. Once the killing begins, it is impossible to turn back the hands of time. We must deal with conflict before it occurs. It can be done. This is the challenge of the post cold war era. This is the challenge I know our country can deal with together with like minded nations. It will not cost us more money. In fact, it will save us billions of dollars every year which I will discuss later.

We have to identify the precursors to conflict such as inappropriate militarization. Often there is a destruction of basic human rights of a group of people. When one group of people is dealt with preferentially over another an imbalance exists. Often the result is a compromise of the human rights of a certain group of individuals. This spirals and becomes early conflict, then more widespread conflict. What often happens is a breakdown of democratic and judicial structures in a country. These are the warning signs of a potential conflict.

We must organize a warning system which uses non-governmental organizations, peace building institutions and countries, and diplomatic observer forces from the United Nations. These groups can extract information and then feed it into the United Nations crisis centre in New York. The information would be fed directly into a security council, not the security council we have today, but a modified security council. I will discuss that later. The security council must bring forth non-military initiatives to try to defuse the conflict before it occurs. In addressing these precursors the following initiatives can take place.

There can be diplomatic initiatives from the United Nations to try to bring the warring parties together. Positive information must be put forth to try to defuse and dispel the myths that are often put forth early in a conflict. We need not look any further than the tragedy in the former Yugoslavia or what happened in Rwanda and Burundi to see one of the early signs is that one group often puts forth a lot of very negative hateful propaganda about another group which polarizes groups under stress and leads to conflict. This can be defused. The United Nations currently has mechanisms to achieve that end but it is not employing them as aggressively as it should. I hope that Mr. Fowler, our representative there, can take the initiative to put this forth in the United Nations.

We can use the international financial institutions as non-military levers in conflict prevention. It is a cutting edge issue that we can put forth, but it requires changing the IFIs and their function as we know it.

Some of the interventions they can make involve: using economic levers on groups in conflict; providing economic and technical help to potentially warring parties; providing technical assistance on good governance and building up democratic infrastructure; and providing loans to peace building groups in order for them to pursue peace building initiatives by people in the country in question. They could provide small repayable loans, such as those of the Grameen Bank, to groups which are being subjected to human rights abuse or where economic levers are being used to push them down economically.

• (1755)

Sanctions must be used very carefully so as not to harm those who will suffer the most in these conflagrations.

Another approach which is not used often enough is to freeze the assets of leaders who are flagrantly abusing the rights of their citizens. This can be done to great effect. Unless we employ measures that will directly affect these leaders where it counts, in their pocketbooks, there will not be much change in their behaviour. This could be applied to such individuals as General Abacha of Nigeria, Mr. Moi of Kenya and others. By applying financial

restrictions and freezing their assets, a powerful lever can be applied to their behaviour.

Implicit in this are changes to the UN Security Council. The way it is structured now, these suggestions cannot and will not work. I suggest expanding the United Nations Security Council to involve the top 32 economic countries in the world. Many would argue that it is unfair. The reality is that he who pays the piper calls the tune and that is the premise it has to be based on. It is not fair, but it is certainly better than what we have today. We must also provide that there is no veto power. All decisions of the security council must be made with a two-thirds majority.

These changes are necessary. We cannot use the 1940s model of international co-operation which has failed to deal with the present geopolitical situation in the world which does not resemble the world situation of 1945. The current structure has hamstrung our ability to pursue peace and avoid the genocide we are talking about today.

Some would argue that the aggressive interventions I have addressed today are not going to be useful and they are not allowed, that they are somehow illegal. That is simply not true. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights presupposes that a nation's affairs are not sacrosanct. What is sacrosanct are the basic human rights of the individual. In other words, international law protects the individual, not the integrity of the nation state. That should be a very important consideration if these changes are to be made.

There is also an economic rationale for early intervention in these areas to prevent a conflict rather than managing the conflict at a later time. We only need to look at the statistics of the last five years to see that peacekeeping costs have skyrocketed way out of proportion and the demands on peacekeeping are going to increase in the future. We cannot allow this to happen. It is simply not sustainable. Therefore, these conflicts must be prevented.

All countries, Canada included, are hamstrung by their current economic situation, their debts and deficits. We do not have the money to get involved in these conflicts. The time is coming when we will not be able to carry out peacekeeping duties which our military men and women have done so admirably, honourably and bravely for so long.

I suggest that Canada cannot do this herself. Canada has an international reputation for fairness and good diplomatic initiatives which is unrivalled in the world. Canada is known to be fair and above board, unlike many other countries. We ought to bring like minded nations, such as New Zealand, Australia, Norway, Sweden, The Netherlands and Belgium, together as a group and then try to influence international structures around the world for peace building. As I said, we cannot do this alone. We have to do this in a multinational fashion. We can get these groups together right now to start.

• (1800)

If we are to have peace we will need all parties involved in a potential conflagration on board. We cannot deny any one group representing the people. We have to also pursue democratic and judicial peace building initiatives in a potential conflagration.

Another issue we are avoiding in peace building is the economic issue. A country will never be able to get on its feet unless the economic structures are there for the people to stand on their own two feet and provide for themselves.

The former Yugoslavia is an excellent case in point. The Dayton peace plan which produced the international implementation force there today is a noble and good solution for the short term. It will not, though, provide peace in Bosnia in the long term. The reason is unless the people in Bosnia can have the economic infrastructure and can then stand on their own two feet and provide for themselves we will always have conflict. We will always have people struggling to get the basic necessities for themselves that are simply not there.

When the basic necessities are not there then we have a desperate population which is prepared and willing by necessity to whatever it has to do to get those basic needs met. That includes conflict.

Those have to be provided. We cannot do it ourselves, and I am not suggesting that. The international community must work with the nations involved and the belligerents involved to build up the infrastructure. In the former Yugoslavia a greater responsibility must be placed on the shoulders of the European Union.

The world has seen the proliferation of internecine conflicts. They have littered the face of the globe over the last 50 years. The international community has been completely unable to prevent conflict. We have managed it sometimes well, sometimes poorly, but we have neglected and have been unable to prevent the genocides from occurring.

We can do this and we must do it. I have given some suggestions I hope the Minister of Foreign Affairs will take into consideration. The way to sell this not only to the Canadian people but also other countries is not only on the basis of humanitarian grounds, which are ample, but on the basis of self-interest.

Unfortunately we will not be able to get anything done unless we argue in a nation's self-interest. If we do not prevent conflicts nation states are laid waste, we have migration of refugees, we have increasing demands on our defence forces, our foreign aid and our domestic social programs. These are costs that hit home. We can prevent these. It takes an investment now but the saving in the long term will be far greater than the investment we do today.

A negotiator in the Palestinian peace process once said peace is when a child buries its parents; war is when a parent buries its child. I hope we can do something to prevent in the future more children being buried unnecessarily.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Daviault (Ahuntsic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member on his speech, on his knowledge of international law and on the excellent suggestions he made for reforms to our international institutions. As this debate is winding down, I would like to remind my hon. colleagues that the entire Canadian Armenian community and members of the Armenian National Committee of Canada are watching us today. And I salute those who are present in the gallery. As the hon. member was saying, words without action are meaningless.

• (1805)

In a few minutes we will be called upon to vote in various divisions on the proposal I put forward. We have achieved much today through this sensitization to the cause of the Armenians, the history of peoples and the history of humanity. But words have meaning.

I therefore salute the member's party for intervening to prevent the watering down of the motion and to prevent our calling a tragedy what is a genocide. I would like to hear him a little more on this attempt at watering down in particular.

[*English*]

Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, what we are trying to do in the House is apply the tragedy that occurred in Armenia in 1915 to what is occurring today and what will occur in the future.

I hope the purpose for this motion is not only to mourn, to commemorate and to teach all of us what occurred in the past, but to use this and other genocides such as what occurred in Europe during the Holocaust and in Cambodia during the vicious regime of Pol Pot to build for the future a constructive, formalized plan for Canada and its neighbours in the international community to prevent these events from occurring again.

As I have said before, the people who have died during the genocides in the past, their lives will have been wasted for little if we do not act today. It is incumbent on all of us to act on history by making the future a better, stronger and more peaceful future for all people.

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the debate today has been a very high level debate, one which restores to the public the sense that this is a place to deal with important and significant issues not only for our own country but for all of humanity.

I particularly appreciated the comment from my colleague opposite concerning the need for this to not just be a day in memory of tragic events throughout the history of mankind but a day of dedication to action.

I want to pay tribute to my colleague from Don Valley North who first brought forward this type of motion at this time last year. He is quite gratified by the nature of the debate that has taken place in the House.

There is no question genocide in a number of forms throughout history has been one of the primary manifestations of the inhumanity people can exercise toward one another.

I ask my colleague if he would not agree that crimes against humanity go beyond genocide, that they take numerous forms. Certainly war crimes would be some of those. The deliberate starvation of people and the deliberate disruption of people from their homes would also be part of crimes against humanity. These are all tragedies.

I prefer the wording before us in the amendment. It refers much more broadly to crimes against humanity and to the tragedy of such events. I wonder why the member wants to focus in by narrowing the description to genocide.

Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, I think implicit in this statement is the idea that this motion not deals with not only genocide but other inhumane tragedies that are occurring as we speak.

• (1810)

She alluded to a number of very important ones, from the rape of innocent civilian women in the former Yugoslavia to forced starvation and summary executions and torture in far away places such as East Timor, Chechnya and the Sudan. All of these are taking place today. We need today as a stepping stone to deal with genocide and also to deal with these other inhumanities.

I know there are many good ideas in the House today that can be applied to the genocides of yesterday and the genocides of tomorrow and also to deal with these multiple inhumanities that litter the globe today.

Again it requires early intervention. Prevention is better than dealing with actions after they have occurred. I welcome the hon. member and any other members to come together through perhaps the committee on foreign affairs or directly through the Minister of Foreign Affairs to put forth many of the good suggestions they have where Canada can take a leadership role in addressing these tragic inhumane situations.

We live in a democracy today. We have that amazing freedom to put forth these ideas and to translate these ideas into action. I have no doubt that some of the fine ideas put forth today and some of the big problems my hon. friend has alluded to can be dealt with and

addressed. Canada can take a leadership role in putting those forth in the international theatre.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to thank and commend the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca for his speech.

Reform members have often had a narrow view of things, but not in this case. I think the hon. member who just spoke managed to open up the debate, to talk about genocide, which is at the heart of the motion before us today. He managed to extend the debate to the broad issue of human rights.

Today's debate allowed us, I think, to address issues of vital importance for the future of humankind. There are still major issues we barely spoke about. In my car this morning, I was listening to a news report that there are now one million antipersonnel mines around the world. Given how slowly they are being removed, they said it would take 1,000 years to remove them all. What is really sad is that such mines are still being laid. I can only conclude that the work will never end.

Yesterday, there was another news report on CBC about child soldiers. In Liberia, children who are only 7, 8 or 10 years old are being asked to murder people, something the military are sometimes reluctant to do for fear of the consequences. So they send children instead. My colleague from the Reform Party also talked about a reform of the Security Council. I think this may help resolve some of the problems being debated today.

I would like to end with a question. The hon. member mentioned at one point in his comments that we could use our economic levers to intervene in conflicts. Does he not agree that, by setting a foreign policy that is totally focused on trade, the Canadian government has deprived itself of some of the levers available to it in the past?

[*English*]

Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question. I absolutely agree with him that the government has in part abrogated its responsibility by putting trade above human rights.

They are not mutually exclusive principles. They can occur hand in hand. You do not have to abrogate your responsibilities to the businesses in this country by just dealing with human rights because it is not fair to them.

However, to ignore human rights ignores that constructive, effective and economic interactions between countries is predicated on peace. If you do not have peace you will not have trade. Therefore both are two parts of the same whole and both can be dealt with in co-operation. I think the international community and the business sector must have a vested interest in peace building. I know the government can deal with both without the exclusion of the other.

• (1815)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate on the Armenian genocide and I want to salute my Armenian friends from Montreal who are in the gallery.

An hon. member: And from Toronto.

Mr. Nunez: Yes, my friends from Toronto and throughout Canada.

Needless to say I strongly support the Bloc Quebecois motion, which states that, on the occasion of the 81st anniversary of the Armenian genocide that started on April 24, 1915, this House and the federal government recognize the week of April 20 to 27 of each year as the week to commemorate man's inhumanity to man.

I cannot support the government's amendment, as this was a genocide, not a tragedy. The extermination of one and a half million human beings is not a simple tragedy, it is a genocide. I commend my hon. colleague, the member for Ahuntsic, a riding next to mine, for the great work he has done on this issue.

As you know, I was born in Latin America, an area that has gone through dictatorships and civil wars, which have resulted in millions of murders, disappearances and blatant violations of the most basic human rights. I am therefore very sensitive to the ordeal the Armenian people have gone through. This people has been persecuted for centuries, but one event defies the imagination: the genocide that took the lives of one and a half million Armenian men, women and children between 1915 and 1917. I should point out that these were unarmed and often defenceless civilians.

During this tragic period of our history, more than 2,000 churches and 200 monasteries were desecrated, while half a million survivors were exiled and forced to live in foreign countries and with foreign cultures. Unfortunately, no reparation has taken place and no action has been taken against those responsible for this genocide.

Armenians are now scattered all around the world, in the United States, Canada, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, France, Lebanon, Syria and so on. But half of them are still living in Armenia. Canada's cultural heritage has been enriched by the arrival of 60,000 Armenians, I am told, 25,000 of whom live in Quebec.

As an immigrant myself and in my capacity as the official opposition critic for citizenship and immigration, I want to salute all our fellow citizens of Armenian origin and to recognize their most valuable contributions to Canada and Quebec. It is a very active and dynamic community whose members are present in all sectors of society, including economy, trade, social and community organizations, culture and politics.

I take this opportunity to salute the hon. member for Don Valley North, who is the first member of Armenian origin to sit in this House. As you know, I am the first member of Latin American origin to sit in Parliament. We share the same responsibility and honour.

The Armenian community is well integrated to its host country and it is also well structured. It has its own schools, churches and cultural centres. In spite of the hardships, Armenians managed to preserve their language, culture, traditions and values. Last Sunday, I delivered a speech in Saint-Laurent's Alex Manoogian school, during the commemoration of the 81st anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

• (1820)

I was very touched when a wreath was laid in honour of the martyrs by a man of over 85 years of age, who was a survivor of that genocide in Armenia, in 1915.

I am proud that the Government of Quebec and the National Assembly recognized the Armenian genocide, as did Ontario, Russia, Israel and the European Parliament. I am also pleased by the attitude and the action of Uruguay's president, who took part in a ceremony to commemorate this genocide.

As for the UN committee on the prevention of discrimination and the protection of minorities, it adopted, on August 29, 1985, a report which states that the 1915 extermination of Armenians is an example of genocide.

Meanwhile, the Canadian government merely deplored the fact that a large number of Armenians were killed during the wars that marked the end of the Ottoman empire, and extended its sympathy to the Armenian community. Given its tradition of democracy and respect for human rights, I hope that, some day, Canada will formally and clearly recognize the Armenian genocide. Why is the Canadian government waiting to make this long-awaited decision by Armenians and, I think, by Quebecers and Canadians as well? The government should stop making speeches and start taking concrete action. Even senator Bob Dole, who is now a candidate to the U.S. presidency, criticized Turkey for refusing to recognize the Armenian genocide.

I also want to express my support for the construction of a memorial for the Armenian martyrs by the city of Montreal. Mayor Pierre Bourque promised to erect such a monument in Marcelin-Wilson park, at the corner of Henri-Bourassa and l'Acadie boulevards, not far from my riding. The ground was broken for it in a ceremony on April 22, 1995 attended by various VIPs but then, seemingly as a result of pressures from the Turkish and Canadian governments, the work was stopped.

It must be noted, however, that such monuments are already in place in a number of cities throughout the world, in France, Lebanon, the United States, Switzerland, Colombia, Argentina, even in Toronto and Ville-St-Laurent in Canada. There are plans in Los Angeles to build an Armenian genocide museum. I therefore appeal to the mayor of Montreal to keep his promise to erect a monument to the Armenian martyrs.

I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to point out the worrisome state of human rights in the world. According to Amnesty International, torture is still practiced in more than one hundred countries. Basic human rights are being violated in Liberia, Algeria, Indonesia, China and other countries. Despite some improvements in Latin America, Amnesty International, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and a number of NGOs have condemned certain countries' use of torture, violence, repression, forced relocation of indigenous communities, the emergence of paramilitary groups, disappearances and impunity.

I feel it is my duty to condemn in this House the contradictions and lack of cohesiveness in the Canadian government's record in promoting democracy and human rights. When the Liberals were in opposition, they had a great deal to say about it, but now they are in power, they place trade before human rights.

This government does nothing to dissuade Canadian companies that invest in countries that do not respect human rights. It ought to follow the example of the European Union, which has taken such actions as making it illegal to import rugs that have been made by child labour.

The Canadian government ought to ensure that its trade agreements include clauses on the respect of human rights. It must be realized that repressive governments lead to instability, which is not propitious to trade and to investment.

I thank the Armenian community for marking, each year, the sad anniversary of this genocide. It has all my admiration and esteem, and deservedly so, for its struggle, its courage, its faithfulness to its language, its culture and its traditions.

It has not forgotten, nor will it ever forget, this tragic event. I support its efforts and tenacity in persuading the international community to do justice to its nation. I salute all those of Armenian origin, and offer them my sympathy and my undying solidarity.

[*English*]

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to thank those who participated in this debate. It is the first time this issue has been debated in Canadian history.

I also want to thank the parties involved, in this case the Bloc Quebecois, the Reform Party and the Liberal Party. I regret that the NDP and the Progressive Conservative Party did not participate in the debate.

I think it is incumbent on all of us to stand for one moment of silence for the victims of genocide.

[*Editor's Note: The House stood in silence*].

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being 6.27 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt proceedings and put forthwith any question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

[*English*]

The question is on the amendment to the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment to the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those in favour of the amendment to the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Call in the members.

(The House divided on the amendment to the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:)

(*Division No. 38*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Althouse
Bachand
Bellehumeur
Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Brien
Chatters
Crête
Dalphond-Guiral
de Savoye
Deshaies
Duceppe
Duncan
Fillion
Frazer
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Guay
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hermanson
Hoeppner
Jennings
Kerpan
Landry
Laurin
Lebel
Lefebvre
Leroux (Shefford)
Manning
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)
Ménard
Mills (Red Deer)
Nunez
Ablonczy
Asselin
Bélisle
Benoit
Bernier (Gaspé)
Bhaduria
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brown (Calgary Southeast/Sud-Est)
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Cummins
Daviault
Debien
Dubé
Dumas
Epp
Forseth
Gagnon (Québec)
Godin
Grubel
Guimond
Hayes
Hill (Macleod)
Jacob
Johnston
Lalonde
Langlois
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Loubier
Marchand
Mayfield
McLaughlin
Meredith
Morrison
Paré
Picard (Drummond)
Pomerleau
Ringma
Sauvageau
Scott (Skeena)
Solberg
Stinson
Taylor
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Williams —93
Plamondon
Riis
Robinson
Schmidt
Silye
Speaker
Strahl
Thompson
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
White (Fraser Valley West/Ouest)

NAYS

Members

Alcock
Anawak
Augustine
Bélair
Bertrand
Bodnar
Boudria
Bryden
Caccia
Campbell
Cauchon
Collenette
Comuzzi
Crawford
Cullen
Dhaliwal
Dion
Easter
Fewchuk
Flis
Fry
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Godfrey
Graham
Guarnieri
Harvard
Hopkins
Iftody
Jackson
Keyes
Kraft Sloan
Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)
Lincoln
MacDonald
Maloney
Marchi
McCormick
McKinnon
Milliken
Mitchell
Murray
O'Brien (London—Middlesex)
Pagtakhan
Patry
Pettigrew
Proud
Regan
Ringuette-Maltais
Robillard
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Shepherd
Simmons
St. Denis
Szabo
Thalheimer
Ur
Walker
Whelan
Young
Allmand
Arseneault
Barnes
Bélanger
Bevilacqua
Bonin
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Byrne
Calder
Catterall
Chamberlain
Collins
Cowling
Culbert
DeVillers
Dingwall
Duhamel
English
Finlay
Fontana
Gagliano
Gerrard
Goodale
Grose
Harper (Churchill)
Hickey
Hubbard
Irwin
Jordan
Knutson
Lastewka
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)
Loney
Malhi
Manley
Marleau
McGuire
Mifflin
Minna
Murphy
Nault
O'Reilly
Paradis
Peters
Pillitteri
Reed
Richardson
Robichaud
Rock
Serré
Sheridan
Skoke
Steckle
Terrana
Torsney
Volpe
Wappel
Wood
Zed—118

PAIRED MEMBERS

Canuel	Caron
Cohen	Gallaway
Kirkby	St-Laurent
Venne	Wells

● (1855)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I declare the amendment to the amendment negatived.

The next question is on the amendment.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if there would be unanimous consent for the question to be deemed to have been put and that the result would be that applied to the previous motion in reverse.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Does the hon. whip of the official opposition agree?

Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral: Agreed.

[*English*]

Mr. Ringma: Agreed.

Mr. Peterson: Mr. Speaker, I wish to be recorded as voting with the government on this issue.

Mrs. Bakopanos: Mr. Speaker, I would like to vote for the amendment.

Mr. Assadourian: Mr. Speaker, I am voting with the government.

Mr. Ianno: Mr. Speaker, I am also voting with the government on this amendment.

Mr. Telegdi: Mr. Speaker, I will be voting with the government on this amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): While we are going through this process, while individual members are rising to indicate their vote, the table officers and I are having some difficulty in hearing clearly what that vote is. I ask the indulgence and co-operation of the House.

Mr. Valeri: Mr. Speaker, I would like to be recorded as voting with the government on the amendment.

Mr. McTeague: Mr. Speaker, I wish to be recorded as voting with the government on this amendment.

● (1900)

Mr. Lee: Mr. Speaker, I would like to be recorded as voting with the government on this amendment.

Ms. Beaumier: Mr. Speaker, I would like to be recorded as voting with the government on the government amendment.

Mr. Cannis: Mr. Speaker, I wish to be recorded as supporting this amendment.

Mr. Perić: Mr. Speaker, I would like to be recorded as voting for the government on this amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Could I ask the whip for the New Democratic Party to indicate the vote for the New Democratic Party?

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, we are following the suggestion by the hon. government whip.

Mr. Bhaduria: Mr. Speaker, I will be voting against the amendment.

(The House divided on the amendment, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 39*)

YEAS

Members

Alcock	Allmand
Anawak	Arseneault
Assadourian	Augustine
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélair
Bélanger	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bodnar
Bonin	Boudria
Brown (Oakville—Milton)	Bryden
Byrne	Caccia
Calder	Campbell
Cannis	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Collenette	Collins
Comuzzi	Cowling
Crawford	Culbert
Cullen	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dingwall
Dion	Duhamel
Easter	English
Fewchuk	Finlay
Flis	Fontana
Fry	Gagliano
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Gerrard
Godfrey	Goodale
Graham	Grose
Guarnieri	Harper (Churchill)
Harvard	Hickey
Hopkins	Hubbard
Ianno	Iftody
Irwin	Jackson
Jordan	Keyes
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lastewka	Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lee
Lincoln	Loney
MacDonald	Malhi
Maloney	Manley
Marchi	Marleau
McCormick	McGuire
McKinnon	McTeague
Mifflin	Milliken
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Murray
Nault	O'Brien (London—Middlesex)
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Patry
Peric	Peters
Peterson	Pettigrew
Pillitteri	Proud
Reed	Regan
Richardson	Ringuette-Maltais
Robichaud	Robillard
Rock	Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Serré	Shepherd
Sheridan	Simmons
Skoke	St. Denis
Steckle	Szabo
Telegdi	Terrana
Thalheimer	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Volpe	Walker
Wappel	Whelan
Wood	Young
Zed—129	

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Althouse	Asselin
Bachand	Bélisle
Bellehumeur	Benoit
Bergeron	Bernier (Gaspé)
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Bhaduria
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brien	Brown (Calgary Southeast/Sud-Est)
Chatters	Chrétien (Frontenac)
Crête	Cummins
Dalphond-Guiral	Daviault
de Savoye	Debien
Deshaies	Dubé
Duceppe	Dumas
Duncan	Epp
Fillion	Forseth
Frazer	Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier	Godin
Grey (Beaver River)	Grubel
Guay	Guimond
Harper (Simcoe Centre)	Hayes
Hermanson	Hill (Macleod)
Hoeppner	Jacob
Jennings	Johnston
Kerpan	Lalonde
Landry	Langlois
Laurin	Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Lebel	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lefebvre	Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Leroux (Shefford)	Loubier
Manning	Marchand
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Mayfield
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)	McLaughlin
Ménard	Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)	Morrison
Nunez	Paré
Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
Pomerleau	Riis
Ringma	Robinson
Sauvageau	Schmidt
Scott (Skeena)	Silye
Solberg	Speaker
Stinson	Strahl
Taylor	Thompson
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)	Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Tremblay (Rosemont)	White (Fraser Valley West/Ouest)
Williams —93	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Canuel	Caron
Cohen	Gallaway
Kirkby	St-Laurent
Venne	Wells

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I declare the amendment carried.

[*Translation*]

The next question is on the main motion as amended.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion as amended.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I declare the motion carried.

(Motion, as amended, agreed to.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BANK ACT

The House resumed from Thursday, April 18 consideration of the motion that Bill C-15, an act to amend, enact and repeal certain laws relating to financial institutions be read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the third reading stage of Bill C-15, an act to amend, enact and repeal certain laws relating to financial institutions.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I wish to seek unanimous consent that members who voted on the amendment by the secretary of state be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House with Liberal members voting yea.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral: The members of the official opposition will vote no on this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Ringma: Mr. Speaker, Reform members will vote no, except for those who might wish to vote yes.

● (1905)

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party votes nay.

Mr. Bhaduria: Mr. Speaker, I will vote against the motion.

Mrs. Parrish: Mr. Speaker, I would like to be recorded as voting yes on this motion.

Mr. Dromisky: I vote yea on Bill C-15.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 40*)

YEAS

Members

Alcock	Allmand
Anawak	Arseneault
Assadourian	Augustine
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélair
Bélanger	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bodnar
Bonin	Boudria
Brown (Oakville—Milton)	Bryden
Byrne	Caccia
Calder	Campbell
Cannis	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Collenette	Collins
Comuzzi	Cowling
Crawford	Culbert

Cullen
Dhaliwal
Dion
Duhamel
English
Finlay
Fontana
Gagliano
Gerrard
Goodale
Grose
Harper (Churchill)
Hickey
Hubbard
Iftody
Jackson
Keyes
Kraft Sloan
Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)
Lee
Loney
Malhi
Manley
Marleau
McGuire
McTeague
Milliken
Mitchell
Murray
O'Brien (London—Middlesex)
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Peric
Peterson
Pillitteri
Reed
Richardson
Robichaud
Rock
Serré
Sheridan
Skoke
Steckle
Telegdi
Thalheimer
Ur
Volpe
Wappel
Wood
Zed—131

DeVillers
Dingwall
Dromisky
Easter
Fewchuk
Flis
Fry
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Godfrey
Graham
Guarnieri
Harvard
Hopkins
Ianno
Irwin
Jordan
Knutson
Lastewka
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lincoln
MacDonald
Maloney
Marchi
McCormick
McKinnon
Mifflin
Minna
Murphy
Nault
O'Reilly
Paradis
Patry
Peters
Pettigrew
Proud
Regan
Ringuette-Maltais
Robillard
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Shepherd
Simmons
St. Denis
Szabo
Terrana
Torsney
Valeri
Walker
Whelan
Young

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Althouse
Bachand
Bellehumeur
Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Brien
Chatters
Crête
Dalphond-Guiral
de Savoye
Deshaies
Duceppe
Duncan
Fillion
Frazer
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Guay
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hermanson
Hoeppner

Ablonczy
Asselin
Bélisle
Benoit
Bernier (Gaspé)
Bhaduria
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brown (Calgary Southeast/Sud-Est)
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Cummins
Daviault
Debien
Dubé
Dumas
Epp
Forseth
Gagnon (Québec)
Godin
Grubel
Guimond
Hayes
Hill (Macleod)
Jacob

Jennings
Kerpan
Landry
Laurin
Lebel
Lefebvre
Leroux (Shefford)
Manning
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)
Ménard
Mills (Red Deer)
Nunez
Picard (Drummond)
Pomerleau
Ringma
Sauvageau
Scott (Skeena)
Solberg
Stinson
Taylor
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Williams —93

Johnston
Lalonde
Langlois
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Loubier
Marchand
Mayfield
McLaughlin
Meredith
Morrison
Paré
Plamondon
Riis
Robinson
Schmidt
Silye
Speaker
Strahl
Thompson
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
White (Fraser Valley West/Ouest)

PAIRED MEMBERS

Canuel
Cohen
Kirkby
Venne

Caron
Gallaway
St-Laurent
Wells

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed.)

* * *

[*Translation*]

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES ACT

The House resumed from April 19, consideration of the motion that Bill C-11, an act to establish the Department of Human Resources Development and to amend and repeal certain related acts, be read the third time and passed, as well as of the amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the amendment by Mrs. Lalonde, at third reading of Bill C-11, an act to establish the Department of Human Resources Development and to amend and repeal certain related acts.

The question is on the amendment.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, if the House is prepared to give its unanimous consent, I suggest that the vote that was taken on the preceding motion be applied to the motion now before the House, but in reverse.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*English*]

Mr. Bhaduria: Agreed, Mr. Speaker.

[*Translation*]

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:)

(*Division No. 41*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Althouse
Bachand
Bellehumeur
Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Brien
Chatters
Crête
Dalphond-Guiral
de Savoye
Deshaies
Duceppe
Duncan
Fillion
Frazer
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Guay
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hermanson
Hoeppner
Jennings
Kerpan
Landry
Laurin
Lebel
Lefebvre
Leroux (Shefford)
Manning
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)
Ménard
Mills (Red Deer)
Nunez
Picard (Drummond)
Pomerleau
Ringma
Sauvageau
Scott (Skeena)
Solberg
Stinson
Taylor
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Williams —93

Ablonczy
Asselin
Bélisle
Benoit
Bernier (Gaspé)
Bhaduria
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brown (Calgary Southeast/Sud-Est)
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Cummins
Daviault
Debien
Dubé
Dumas
Epp
Forseth
Gagnon (Québec)
Godin
Grubel
Guimond
Hayes
Hill (Macleod)
Jacob
Johnston
Lalonde
Langlois
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Loubier
Marchand
Mayfield
McLaughlin
Meredith
Morrison
Paré
Plamondon
Riis
Robinson
Schmidt
Silye
Speaker
Strahl
Thompson
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
White (Fraser Valley West/Ouest)

NAYS

Members

Alcock
Anawak
Assadourian
Bakopanos
Beaumier

Allmand
Arseneault
Augustine
Barnes
Bélair
Bélanger
Bevilacqua
Bonin
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Byrne
Calder
Cannis
Cauchon
Collenette
Comuzzi
Crawford
Cullen
Dhaliwal
Dion
Duhamel
English
Finlay
Fontana
Gagliano
Gerrard
Goodale
Grose
Harper (Churchill)
Hickey
Hubbard
Iftody
Jackson
Keyes
Kraft Sloan
Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)
Lee
Loney
Malhi
Manley
Marleau
McGuire
McTeague
Milliken
Mitchell
Murray
O'Brien (London—Middlesex)
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Peric
Peterson
Pillitteri
Reed
Richardson
Robichaud
Rock
Serré
Sheridan
Skoke
Steckle
Telegdi
Thalheimer
Ur
Volpe
Wappel
Wood
Zed—131

Bertrand
Bodnar
Boudria
Bryden
Caccia
Campbell
Catterall
Chamberlain
Collins
Cowling
Culbert
DeVillers
Dingwall
Dromisky
Easter
Fewchuk
Flis
Fry
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Godfrey
Graham
Guarnieri
Harvard
Hopkins
Ianno
Irwin
Jordan
Knutson
Lastewka
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lincoln
MacDonald
Maloney
Marchi
McCormick
McKinnon
Mifflin
Minna
Murphy
Nault
O'Reilly
Paradis
Patry
Peters
Pettigrew
Proud
Regan
Ringuette-Maltais
Robillard
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Shepherd
Simmons
St. Denis
Szabo
Terrana
Torsney
Valeri
Walker
Whelan
Young

PAIRED MEMBERS

Canuel
Cohen
Kirkby
Venne

Caron
Gallaway
St-Laurent
Wells

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I declare the amendment negatived.

[*English*]

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ACT

The House resumed from Monday, April 22, consideration of the motion that Bill C-18, an act to establish the Department of Health and to amend and repeal certain acts, be read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-18, an act to establish the Department of Health and to amend and repeal certain acts.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, if the House were to give its unanimous consent, I believe that all members who voted on the previous motion could be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting yea.

Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral: Mr. Speaker, the members of the official opposition will vote nay.

[*English*]

Mr. Ringma: Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party will vote no except those who wish to exercise their right to a free vote.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, the New Democrats will vote no.

Mr. Ringma: Mr. Speaker, can I get clarification? Are we on Bill C-11 or Bill C-18?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): We are dealing with Bill C-18.

Mr. Ringma: Mr. Speaker, in that case may I register the vote of Reformers as being yes except for those who wish to exercise their right in another way.

Mr. Bhaduria: Mr. Speaker, I am voting yes.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 42*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Alcock
Anawak
Assadourian
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bélanger
Bertrand
Bhaduria
Bonin
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Brown (Calgary Southeast/Sud-Est)
Bryden
Caccia
Campbell
Catterall
Chamberlain
Collenette
Comuzzi
Crawford
Cullen
DeVillers
Dingwall
Dromisky
Duncan
English
Fewchuk
Flis
Forseth
Fry
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Godfrey
Graham
Grose
Guarnieri
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hayes
Hickey
Hoeppner
Hubbard
Iftody
Jackson
Johnston
Kerpan
Knutson
Lastewka
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lincoln
MacDonald
Maloney
Manning
Marleau
Mayfield
McCormick
McKinnon
Meredith
Milliken
Minna
Morrison
Murray
O'Brien (London—Middlesex)
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Peric
Peterson
Pillitteri
Reed
Richardson
Ringuette-Maltais
Robillard
Schmidt
Scott (Skeena)
Shepherd
Silye
Skoke
Speaker
Steckle
Strahl
Telegdi
Thalheimer
Torsney
Valeri
Walker
Whelan
Williams
Young
Ablonczy
Allmand
Arseneault
Augustine
Barnes
Bélair
Benoit
Bevilacqua
Bodnar
Boudria
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Byrne
Calder
Cannis
Cauchon
Chatters
Collins
Cowling
Culbert
Cummins
Dhaliwal
Dion
Duhamel
Easter
Epp
Finlay
Fontana
Frazer
Gagliano
Gerrard
Goodale
Grey (Beaver River)
Grubel
Harper (Churchill)
Harvard
Hermanson
Hill (Macleod)
Hopkins
Ianno
Irwin
Jennings
Jordan
Keyes
Kraft Sloan
Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)
Lee
Loney
Malhi
Manley
Marchi
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)
McGuire
McTeague
Mifflin
Mills (Red Deer)
Mitchell
Murphy
Nault
O'Reilly
Paradis
Patry
Peters
Pettigrew
Proud
Regan
Ringma
Robichaud
Rock
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Serré
Sheridan
Simmons
Solberg
St. Denis
Stinson
Szabo
Terrana
Thompson
Ur
Volpe
Wappel
White (Fraser Valley West/Ouest)
Wood
Zed—172

NAYS

Members

Althouse
Bachand
Bellehumeur
Asselin
Bélisle
Bergeron

Bernier (Gaspé)	Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Brien	Chrétien (Frontenac)
Crête	Dalphond-Guiral
Daviault	de Savoye
Debien	Deshaies
Dubé	Duceppe
Dumas	Fillion
Gagnon (Québec)	Gauthier
Godin	Guay
Guimond	Jacob
Lalonde	Landry
Langlois	Laurin
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	Lebel
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Lefebvre
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	Leroux (Shefford)
Loubier	Marchand
McLaughlin	Ménard
Nunez	Paré
Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
Pomerleau	Riis
Robinson	Sauvageau
Taylor	Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)	Tremblay (Rosemont) —52

PAIRED MEMBERS

Canuel	Caron
Cohen	Gallaway
Kirkby	St-Laurent
Venne	Wells

● (1910)

(Bill read the third time and passed.)

* * *

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-11, an act to establish the Department of Human Resources Development and to amend and repeal certain related acts, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I think you would find unanimous consent for the House to take the vote on the main motion for third reading of Bill C-11 by applying in reverse the vote taken on the amendment to the motion, which we discussed in the House a while ago.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. Is there unanimous consent to apply the vote as indicated by the chief government whip?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral: Mr. Speaker, the members of the official opposition will vote no.

[*English*]

Mr. Ringma: Mr. Speaker, could I get clarification once again? The chief government whip has turned the order over. We have gone from the amendment to Bill C-11 to Bill C-18 and now we are back to Bill C-11. Are we quite sure we are on the main motion of Bill C-11?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): We are dealing with the main motion on Bill C-11.

Mr. Ringma: Reform members will vote no, except those who wish to exercise their right to do otherwise.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, New Democrats vote no.

Mr. Bhaduria: Mr. Speaker, I will be voting for the motion.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 43*)

YEAS

Members

Alcock	Allmand
Anawak	Arseneault
Assadourian	Augustine
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélair
Bélanger	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bhaduria
Bodnar	Bonin
Boudria	Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Bryden	Byrne
Caccia	Calder
Campbell	Cannis
Catterall	Cauchon
Chamberlain	Collenette
Collins	Comuzzi
Cowling	Crawford
Culbert	Cullen
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dingwall	Dion
Dromisky	Duhamel
Easter	English
Fewchuk	Finlay
Flis	Fontana
Fry	Gagliano
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Gerrard
Godfrey	Goodale
Graham	Grose
Guarnieri	Harper (Churchill)
Harvard	Hickey
Hopkins	Hubbard
Ianno	Iftody
Irwin	Jackson
Jordan	Keyes
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lastewka	Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lee
Lincoln	Loney
MacDonald	Malhi
Maloney	Manley
Marchi	Marleau
McCormick	McGuire
McKinnon	McTeague
Mifflin	Milliken
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Murray
Nault	O'Brien (London—Middlesex)
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Parrish
Patry	Peric
Peters	Peterson
Pettigrew	Pillitteri
Proud	Reed
Regan	Richardson
Ringuette-Maltais	Robichaud
Robillard	Rock
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)	Serré
Shepherd	Sheridan
Simmons	Skoke
St. Denis	Steckle
Szabo	Telegdi
Terrana	Thalheimer
Torsney	Ur
Valeri	Volpe
Walker	Wappel
Whelan	Wood
Young	Zed—132

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Althouse	Asselin
Bachand	Bélisle
Bellehumeur	Benoit
Bergeron	Bernier (Gaspé)
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Brien
Brown (Calgary Southeast/Sud-Est)	Chatters
Chrétien (Frontenac)	Crête
Cummins	Dalphond-Guiral
Daviault	de Savoye
Debien	Deshaies
Dubé	Duceppe
Dumas	Duncan
Epp	Fillion
Forseth	Frazer
Gagnon (Québec)	Gauthier
Godin	Grey (Beaver River)
Grubel	Guay
Guimond	Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hayes	Hermanson
Hill (Macleod)	Hoeppner
Jacob	Jennings
Johnston	Kerpan
Lalonde	Landry
Langlois	Laurin
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	Lebel
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Lefebvre
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	Leroux (Shefford)
Loubier	Manning
Marchand	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Mayfield	McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)
McLaughlin	Ménard
Meredith	Mills (Red Deer)
Morrison	Nunez
Paré	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Pomerleau
Riis	Ringma
Robinson	Sauvageau
Schmidt	Scott (Skeena)
Silye	Solberg
Speaker	Stinson
Strahl	Taylor
Thompson	Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)	Tremblay (Rosemont)
White (Fraser Valley West/Ouest)	Williams—92

PAIRED MEMBERS

Canuel	Caron
Cohen	Gallaway
Kirkby	St-Laurent
Venne	Wells

(Bill read the third time and passed).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I wish to inform the House that because of the delay there will be no Private Members' Business today. Accordingly, the order will be rescheduled for another sitting.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

● (1915)

[*English*]

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

FEDNOR

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many of the constituents in my riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka are directly affected by recent changes to FEDNOR programming. As a new initiative, this will have a positive impact on their businesses.

I wholeheartedly support the government's renewed commitment to regional economic development in northern Ontario. The budget for this program is being increased to $60 million over three years. The government is assuring that this money is being wisely invested on programs and services that work to increase the economic and employment potential in northern Ontario.

In his response to my initial question, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry referenced an approximate fivefold leveraging of money from Canada's financial institutions to help get capital into the hands of northern Ontario's small business men and women.

This partnering is an excellent example of how government and the private sector can work together for the benefit of small businesses. This is very good news for northern Ontario. Improved access to capital constantly dominates small business' wish list. It is one very important part of the recently announced FEDNOR initiative and is an improvement that my colleagues and I in northern Ontario worked very hard to see implemented.

The government has also worked persistently to get more money into the hands of Canada's small business men and women so they in turn can invest in their businesses, expand their services and most importantly, hire fellow Canadians.

The government's renewed FEDNOR initiative emphasizes working with private and public sector partners to facilitate in five specific areas: access to capital which I mentioned; enhanced business competitiveness; community economic development; networking, and providing a stronger regional voice for the north.

This emphasis on developing specific tools for northern Ontario businesses is of critical importance in the communities in my riding and in communities across northern Ontario. I strongly support the partnership approach in the new initiative which creates

an environment in which small businesses can create wealth and jobs in northern Ontario.

It is also significant to note that not only are the programs being improved but service delivery is being made more efficient. FEDNOR's operating expenditures will be reduced by 40 per cent.

The existing Community Futures development corporation will become a major delivery component of this program, making highly effective use of resources that are already in place in northern Ontario. These organizations will be provided new capital and given the tools to attract additional private sector investment.

Also, the new FEDNOR program will be providing up to $4 million in direct investment in tourism, another very important component of the economy in my riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka. This will be done through co-operative marketing initiatives and through the development of specialty tourism packages and training.

The government cares about northern Ontario. It understands its role to create an environment in which the small business community of northern Ontario can create jobs. The changes to FEDNOR demonstrate this Liberal government's commitment to a jobs and growth agenda.

Mr. Morris Bodnar (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 1995 a major conference was organized in Timmins on the economic development needs of northern Ontario. Over 200 northern Ontario stakeholders attended.

The results of the conference were analysed by expert groups that formulated recommendations which were further refined by regional sounding boards comprising a cross section of regional interests.

The new FEDNOR will work closely with all existing regional economic development stakeholders, including the province. It seeks to create a permanent set of local capabilities to support jobs and growth while reducing overlap and duplication. Under the new FEDNOR, small businesses will have better access to the information, services and capital they need to be successful.

• (1920)

FEDNOR will increase the availability of capital in northern Ontario by forming partnerships with financial institutions to provide new forms of higher risk financing of small businesses. It will also provide additional capital to community futures development corporations to further develop their micro-lending programs.

Finally, FEDNOR will provide start-up financing for emerging, innovative small businesses as well as for such activities as non-bankable R and D specialized training.

FEDNOR remains a work in progress which will continue to evolve to meet the needs of northern Ontario. Future priorities include programs to address the equity and quasi-equity needs of intermediate small businesses having difficulty attracting venture capital, initiatives to meet the special needs of aboriginal entrepreneurs and northern Ontario's francophone communities and measures to improve the economic prospects of women and youth.

FISHERIES

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in essence this intervention is to urge the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans not to give away key federal powers.

Let me explain. Last week I asked the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans not to delegate to the provinces section 35(2) of the Fisheries Act. In brief, this section prohibits the harmful alternation, disruption or destruction of fish habitat unless authorized by the minister or under regulations.

If section 35(2) is delegated to the provinces it could no longer serve as a trigger for the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. The result would be less protection for our streams, our shorelines and wetlands when it comes to the environmental assessment process.

Instead the suggestion is being made that environmental assessment be carried out only on large projects, as some are proposing. I submit this is not desirable because dealing with large projects only means that the cumulative effect of small projects would not be taken into account.

In the past the government has, on occasion, delegated certain powers under the Fisheries Act to the provinces but it should be cautious and learn from experience. For example, in his 1990 report the auditor general points out that when powers were delegated to the provinces for monitoring and enforcement of mining effluent regulations under the Fisheries Act, compliance fell from 85 per cent in 1982 to 48 per cent in 1988.

This poor track record is now compounded by the fact that some provincial governments such as the Harris government in Ontario are deeply cutting their ministries of the environment and natural resources. These are the ministries that would be charged with monitoring and enforcing the federal powers such as the protection of freshwater fish habitat under section 35(2).

For example, the Ontario government is cutting 752 staff from the Ministry of the Environment and Energy and 2,170 from the Ministry of Natural Resources. Furthermore, with the implementation of Bill 26 and the repeal of the Planning Act legislation, the Harris government has effectively eliminated protection for environmentally significant areas in the province of Ontario.

In light of this massive dismantling of environmental regulations, can the minister of state responsible for natural resources assure the House that he and the government will not give away section 35(2) of the Fisheries Act and actually retain that section as a federal power so that the trigger offered by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act will not be lost and its benefits to the Canadian population and future natural resources not damaged?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Fernand Robichaud (Secretary of State (Agriculture and Agri-Food, Fisheries and Oceans), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans administers a piece of legislation, the Fisheries Act, which contains very broad prohibitions against the destruction of fish and their habitat. In simple terms, no one can modify a fish habitat without being authorized to do so by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, which, by the way, is the only one empowered to grant such authorizations.

Many human activities can alter fish habitat, from the construction of a culvert to the damming of large rivers to generate electricity.

Reviewing development proposals to determine their potential impact on fish habitat is a key component of DFO's habitat management program. Like all other DFO activities, this program is being assessed as part of the program review.

In other words, the department asked itself if maintaining this function was justified. The provinces are also reviewing a number of these development proposals according to their own legislation on the environment as well as on land and water use.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans wondered whether its was appropriate for two levels of government to be involved in projects of such little significance as building a drainage trench or if efforts should not be made instead to identify any potential areas of duplication and overlap with a view to eliminating them. I think that the choice was obvious.

As the hon. member knows, this government's intention to take a more efficient approach to freshwater fish habitat management in closer partnership with the provinces was clearly stated in the speech from the throne. The challenge now facing all levels of government will be to identify those sectors where activities can be streamlined while at the same time ensuring the level of protection that we all want for the environment in general and fisheries resources in particular.

To conclude, I can assure the hon. member that the government attaches and will continue to attach great importance to the protection of fish habitat and to the integrity of the environmental assessment process.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24.

(The House adjourned at 7.27 p.m.)

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