House of Commons Debates

41st PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION
EDITED HANSARD ● NUMBER 019
Tuesday, November 19, 2013

Human Rights

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):
 Mr. Speaker, today I am tabling a petition from Edmontonians and people from Sherwood Park calling on the House of Commons to intervene in the Canadian Museum of Human Rights. The petitioners state that the Government of Canada has recognized fundamental human rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and has provided substantial funding for capital and operational funding to the museum.

 Since the Government of Canada has recognized the Holodomor, they are calling on Parliament to ensure that the Holodomor and Canada's first national internment operations be permanently and prominently displayed at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

*   *   *

41st PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION
EDITED HANSARD ● NUMBER 021
Thursday, November 21, 2013

Holodomor

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC):
 Mr. Speaker, on November 23, I encourage all Canadians to remember and raise awareness of the Holodomor, which was the genocide by starvation perpetrated by Joseph Stalin's ruthless Soviet regime in an attempt to stamp out Ukrainian nationhood. This deliberately planned famine claimed the lives of millions of Ukrainian men, women, and children in 1932 and 1933.

As Prime Minister Harper said following his visit to the Holodomor memorial in Kyiv in 2010, "To contemplate an act of malevolence on that scale truly focuses one's mind on the nature of this evil".

Saturday, November 23, marks the 80th anniversary of the Holodomor, one of the most horrific events in human history.

Canada was one of the first countries in the world to officially recognize the Holodomor as a genocide. My colleague, the MP for Selkirk—Interlake, introduced bill C-459, which designates the fourth Saturday of November as a memorial day for the Ukrainian famine, but also acknowledges the famine as an act of genocide.

I encourage my colleagues and all Canadians to participate in the numerous Holodomor commemorations across Canada this weekend. We must never forget.

41st PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION
EDITED HANSARD ● NUMBER 022
Friday, November 22, 2013

* * *

Multiculturalism

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, at this time each year Canadians gather in solemn commemoration of the Holodomor, perpetuated by the Soviet regime on the Ukrainian people 80 years ago.

In 2008, our Parliament passed an act to establish a Holodomor memorial day, and to officially recognize the Ukrainian Famine of 1932 to 1933 as an act of genocide.

Could the Minister of State for Multiculturalism please tell us why it is important that all Canadians remember the atrocities that took place during the Holodomor?

Hon. Tim Uppal (Minister of State (Multiculturalism), CPC):

Mr. Speaker, on the fourth Saturday of November we join Ukrainian communities across Canada in commemorating Holodomor Memorial Day. Holodomor was a horrific act of genocide carried out by Joseph Stalin's soviet regime through the deliberate starvation of millions of Ukrainians.

Our government has been committed to raising awareness of Holodomor through the establishment of a monument to the victims of communism in Ottawa. We have an obligation to ensure future generations of Canadians learn about and remember the Holodomor. We will always remember them.

* * *

41st PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION
EDITED HANSARD ● NUMBER 023
Monday, November 25, 2013

Ukraine

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, this past Thursday, the Ukrainian government suspended the ongoing negotiations over a trade and political agreement with the European Union. In reaction to this, thousands of Ukrainians took to the streets this weekend, not only to express their dissatisfaction but their bitter disappointment as well.

Our Conservative government is deeply concerned by this decision. These agreements with the EU presented an opportunity for the Ukrainian government to bring about greater economic prosperity for the people of Ukraine.

It was a missed opportunity to strengthen and reaffirm the values of freedom, democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and balanced justice. The Ukrainian government must continue to make efforts to strengthen its democratic institutions. An active and legitimate opposition is crucial to a vibrant and effective democracy.

Our Conservative government will continue to stand with the people of Ukraine in their pursuit of their many shared values, which would have been enshrined in this agreement. We will stand with the Ukrainian people in their aspirations for a strong democracy, for hope, and for their future.

Presence in the Gallery

The Deputy Speaker:

I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of a parliamentary delegation from Ukraine, led by His Excellency Volodymyr Rybak, Chairman of the Parliament of Ukraine.

41st PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION
EDITED HANSARD ● NUMBER 024
Tuesday, November 26, 2013

Holodomor Memorial Day

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):

Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the solemn occasion of the 80th anniversary of the Holodomor. This genocide by famine, perpetrated against the Ukrainian people in the so-called breadbasket of Europe by Stalin's Soviet regime in 1932-1933, took millions of lives and has scarred generations to this day.

I am very proud to have joined in the vote in this House for all-party support for recognition of Holodomor Memorial Day in Canada. The City of Toronto announced a similar proclamation in a moving ceremony at City Hall last Saturday evening. I have also joined with Ukrainian Canadians in my community of Parkdale—High Park, as well as with those across Canada, in pressing for this terrible history to be recognized in our schools and museums.

We salute Ukrainian Canadians for their strong stance in defence of democracy, freedom, and human rights. They will always have a friend in the New Democratic Party, and we stand with them in saying, "Never forget, never again".

*   *   *

Holodomor Memorial Day

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, today we remember the Holodomor, a crime against humanity the world in the past knew little of, hidden behind the Soviet curtain of iron. More than seven million people perished in Ukraine 80 years ago in a forced famine of unimaginable horror. The deep, rich soil of Ukraine, known as the breadbasket of Europe, suffered not the ravages of nature but suffered the savagery of one man: Stalin. While millions of Ukrainians horribly starved to death, the people of the world feasted on Ukraine's bountiful crops, stolen by Stalin's evil regime.

We must speak out to support historical truths of mankind's failings, in Canada and around the world, or revisionist historians, deniers of the Holodomor, will educate the world with their version of the truth.

We remember today the victims of the Holodomor, the dark side of humanity. By remembering, we help the world guard against those who would repeat such genocide.

*   *   *

Holodomor Memorial Day

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, we remembered and raised awareness of the horrific and catastrophic famine of 1932-33 that claimed the lives of millions of Ukrainian men, women, and children. The Holodomor, a genocide by starvation, orchestrated by the brutal communist regime of Joseph Stalin, was an attempt to stamp out the aspirations of the people of Ukraine.

It is important to honour the memories of those who suffered and those who perished in one of the worst genocides the world has ever witnessed. We need to always remember those victims and the horror that was inflicted upon Ukraine by Stalin's communist dictatorship.

Canada was the first western country to recognize this deliberate starvation as an act of genocide when Parliament passed my bill in 2008. This is a testament to our country's strong and proud ties to Ukraine. We stand in solidarity with the over one million Canadians of Ukrainian heritage and Ukrainians around the world and remember those affected 80 years ago by this dark chapter in Ukraine's history.

[Member spoke in Ukrainian as follows:]

Vichnaya Pamyat. May their memories be eternal.

I encourage all parliamentarians to attend this evening's Holodomor service.

*   *   *

41st PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION
EDITED HANSARD ● NUMBER 025
Wednesday, November 27, 2013

Ukraine

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, our government is proud to have deployed 500 Canadian election observers to monitor Ukraine's 2012 parliamentary elections, and I was honoured to be one of those observers.

During those elections, independent Ukrainians and international election monitors pointed to government interference as well as significant flaws and irregularities in the voting process. In particular, there were five electoral districts where the integrity and voting process were seriously compromised, so seriously, in fact, that as a result, Ukraine will hold repeat elections for five of these electoral districts on December 15.

To improve the integrity of these upcoming elections, our government today announced that it would support an observation mission composed of 25 observers.

This decision demonstrates Canada's continuing commitment to supporting the people of Ukraine's journey toward democratic development. Our mission will help to discourage electoral fraud and support free and fair elections in Ukraine.