

respect to the attendance of President Castro. I extend apologies for the outstanding question with respect to North Korea, and I undertake to do my very best to have both of those answers back before we break at the end of the day on Thursday.

This past couple of weeks have proven more difficult than usual to contact the ministers involved, resulting in some delay. I shall make a special effort to answer those questions before we adjourn.

Example of Response during a Q&A period

September 21, 2000 Summit of the Americas 2000-01- Invitation of President of Cuba

(Response to question raised by Hon. Marcel Prud'homme on June 27, 2000)

The Honourable Dan Hays (Deputy Leader of the Government): The Summit of the Americas is a process that is driven by decisions adopted by consensus among its members. The countries of this hemisphere have together endorsed a position that sees Cuba excluded from participating in the Summit process until the Cuban government demonstrates an acceptance of democratic principles and norms respecting human rights.

The Cuban government's political behaviour since early 1999 - particularly its ideological tightening, its harassment of political activists and its lack of progress on basic rights such as freedom of expression - runs contrary to a process dedicated to democracy and economic integration.

Canada supports this hemispheric consensus. Indeed, one result of our policy review toward Cuba last year was to limit any Canadian support for deepening Cuba's involvement in the hemisphere until Cuba displays a will to proceed with political and economic reform.

Canada, however, still strongly believes in working with the Cuban government and Cuban society to encourage political and economic opening. Canadian engagement is designed to provide Cuba with the kind of assistance needed for a transition to a society where respect for human rights, genuinely representative government institutions and an open economy are fundamental.