

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

ALZHEIMER AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre): Mr. Speaker, January is Alzheimer Awareness Month in Canada. All across the country organizations involved with Alzheimer's disease will undertake activities to raise awareness of this terrible illness. There is no known cause or cure for Alzheimer's disease. It not only affects the people who have it but it also affects the lives of their families and friends.

Caring for someone with Alzheimer's at home is challenging and burdensome. Alzheimer Awareness Month is a time to demonstrate support for Canadians with Alzheimer's and their families. It is also a time to acknowledge the many informal caregivers who are doing such a tremendous job throughout the country.

I urge all Canadians to support efforts to increase public awareness of Alzheimer's disease and to research to find a cure.

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[Translation]

TRAGEDY IN LES BOULES

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane): Mr. Speaker, the small village of Les Boules in my constituency was hit by a terrible tragedy last Tuesday, when five members of one family died in the fire that destroyed their home. Mr. Michel St-Pierre and his four daughters, Julie, Claudia, Jessie and Émilie, aged 15 months to 11 years, all died in the blaze. Only the mother, Martine, miraculously got away. Mr. St-Pierre was well known in the area for his involvement in municipal politics and his performance in various sports. The couple also did volunteer work to help the destitute in the area.

I want to express my deepest sympathy to the friends and family of Mr. St-Pierre as well as to his fellow citizens. This loss will deeply affect this small community.

[English]

The Speaker: Order. I know hon. members want to present their statements, but before I give the floor to the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River may I suggest that when they practise their statements they are about 50 seconds, and things would probably flow more smoothly in the House.

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DECORUM

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a matter of importance to all members of the House

S. O. 31

of Commons, one which I believe is of concern to many Canadians. I am speaking of decorum, or rather the lack of it, in the Chamber.

I applaud my colleagues in the Reform Party, the members of the Bloc Québécois, as well as the new Liberal and independent MPs, for the restraint they have shown and for the example they are attempting to set for our more experienced colleagues.

Considering the lack of respect demonstrated by some hon. members, is it any wonder that Canadians take comedians seriously but think politicians are a joke?

If we are ever to change the attitude of Canadians toward parliamentarians our greatest opportunity is now. I implore you, Mr. Speaker, as well as members of the media and the constituents we represent, to assist us rookie MPs in our efforts to restore dignity to the House.

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MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to refute statements made by members of the Official Opposition who charge that so-called ethnic ghettos are the inevitable byproduct of Canada's multiculturalism policy.

In fact my constituents and I in Winnipeg North view the tremendous ethnic diversity of our neighbourhoods as one of their most endearing and exciting qualities.

The variety of cultures that come together on our streets and in our schools and offices enhance the character and quality of life for all residents.

The suggestion that the varied ethnic makeup of an area necessarily leads to any form of ghettoization is patently false.

The multiculturalism policy is there to help primarily non-English, non-French and non-aboriginal Canadians on an individual and community basis to play an important role in the development and cohesion of Canadian society.

Overall the policy is about the equal participation of all citizens irrespective of cultural backgrounds and thereby counteracting isolation and fostering national unity.

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POVERTY

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, the city of Winnipeg has the highest percentage of low income households in western Canada. Twelve thousand households use food banks every month, almost three times as many as in 1990.

Unfortunately there has been a collective growth in the number of people using food banks across the country.