

*Canada Diary by Tanja Kremenovic, Vanja Malidzan, Danijela Dabic from Banja Luka.*

*Day 1*

On our first day in Canada, Sunday, March 15, we went to the Museum of Civilizations where we received a short briefing from Mr. Lee on history of Canada, its culture and traditions. The briefing helped us to get a better understanding of the historical background of the problems that modern Canadian society is facing today (First Nations, New Settlers, immigrants, Franco phones vs. Anglophone...). He also shared insights on the Canadian political system, parties and important political issues that we should be aware of during our stay.

*Day 2*

Our first official meeting was with Mr. Lee and his colleagues from CCFPD which is a relatively new institution in Canadian Government. The purpose of the Centre is to assist the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in creating and conducting projects in countries that are of special interest to the Canadian Government. CCFPD was especially interested to hear from us about what projects we thought the Canadian Government could do in our countries.

After that we had interesting meeting with M.P. Ken Epp, from the Reform Party of Canada. The Reform Party is a rightist, nationalist party that is the official opposition to ruling party in Parliament. Most of the support they receive is from the western part of the country. The Reform Party are the most aggressive opponents to Quebec's secessionists and the party is seen as exclusive and intolerant. Even though Mr. Epp. was very moderate in his presentation of the party, his views on issue of Quebec were very radical.

In Parliament we witnessed "Question Period" which was very new and very exciting experience for all of us coming from the countries where any criticism of Government is seen as national treason. It is interesting that every day the Prime minister and members of the Cabinet have to answer all the questions of M.P.s and that this discussion contributes to the total transparency of their work and makes them accountable to the public they represent. That is definitely one of the first conditions for democratic functioning of government institutions. We should adopt similar practice in our country as soon as possible.

We then met with the Minister of Transport, Mr. Collenette, who was the Minister of Defense during the war in Bosnia (from 1993 to 1995). We had many questions for him and we had a good discussion with him about Bosnia. We learned from him that every single document – every piece of paper in every Minister's office is at the disposal for any individual who wants to see it, following the usual request procedure. We could find good use for this practice in our baby-democracies.

At the end of that day we got a chance to experience something we had heard a lot about before – volunteering as a Liberal Party activists. We helped them to prepare some packages for their bi-annual Convention. We could see a good example of people