

After being in office for over a year, the Liberals have proven, beyond any doubt, that their strategy regarding trade with the US is an utter and complete failure.

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[English]

BILL C-226

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to participate in the debate of Bill C-226 and in a free vote last Tuesday night which sent Bill C-226 to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs. This bill would strike section 745 from the Criminal Code, thereby denying those sentenced to life imprisonment the opportunity for early parole.

The bill passed by a vote of 136 to 103. This bill demonstrates how the use of free votes can make meaningful input from all parliamentarians and it also demonstrates the value of a truly representative legislature.

• (1405)

I must commend the member for York—South Weston for having the conviction to put this bill forward. I would like to commend all those in the House who voted in favour of this bill.

This is truly a victory for free votes and truly a victory for Canadians who demand a safer society.

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RAILWAYS

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the decision by the Minister of Transport to turn down the offer by CP Rail to purchase the CNR east of Winnipeg.

I want to suggest to the minister that what he should do now as a second step is abandon his plans to privatize or commercialize the CNR in some way and rather turn his attention to how to create a larger policy environment in which railways can once again thrive in this country.

We need to do things about the tax system. We need to look at ways in which the costs that the railways incur are incurred by them directly in a way that other transportation modes do not have to do similarly.

There are a lot of things that the minister could look at to return railways to the prominent place that they once had, not for the sake of a romantic vision of the past but for the sake of the environment, for the sake of the future.

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I believe that rail is the transportation mode of the future. I would ask the minister to consider ways in which he could strengthen CN and railways in general in this country.

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FRIENDSHIP CENTRES

Mrs. Marlene Cowling (Dauphin—Swan River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contribution of the 114 friendship centres across Canada.

These centres provide vital services to aboriginal peoples, including job training and placement, literacy, advanced education, child care and substance abuse counselling.

Forty years of experience and a large volunteer base provide friendship programs with the ability to address aboriginal needs in a culturally relevant and fiscally responsible way.

It is important that we continue to support our nation's friendship centres. We need to help strengthen the network of support services they have built. We need to ensure that friendship centres can continue to offer their important services to aboriginal Canadians now and tomorrow.

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FIRST NATIONS POLICING SERVICES

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Vancouver South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to inform the House today that the Government of Canada has successfully negotiated a number of community tripartite agreements with five First Nations and the province of British Columbia.

Under these agreements aboriginal members of the First Nations common policing service will be dedicated to provide improved safety and security for the people living in the Haisla, Fort Nelson and Prophet River, Nanaimo, Nanoose and Nisga'a First Nations.

This RCMP First Nations community policing service will be able to provide policing services sensitive to the needs and culture of the people living in these communities.

These agreements were signed under the terms of the federal First Nations policing policy. Under this policy the federal government pays 52 per cent and the province 48 per cent of the cost of the police service.

I am sure all members will join me in congratulating the Ministry of the Solicitor General, the Government of British Columbia and the five First Nations.