

*Government Orders*

parliamentary secretary to be in the Chamber while this debate is going on.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** Once more, I must remind members on both sides that in the House one does not mention who is absent and who is present.

**Mr. Robinson:** Mr. Speaker, we will soon find out if the Conservatives will participate in this important debate, important not only for the Haitian community in Canada, but also for all Canadians who are deeply concerned about the tragic situation in Haiti.

[*English*]

It will be two years ago next week, December 16, 1990, that the first democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was elected in the country of Haiti with a vote of 67 per cent.

That historic victory brought not only a great sense of hope and optimism to a country that was desperately poor, in fact the poorest country in the Caribbean and Latin America, but a sense that the terrible abuses of human rights, the tragic legacy of Duvalier, both father and son, had finally come to an end. There was a hope for economic justice, a new beginning for the people of Haiti.

Today, two years later, Haiti once again is gripped by fear, poverty, brutal denial of fundamental human rights and murder. The *tontons macoutes* and their allies in the army, the thugs that are imposing their will through iron fists, are in fact running that country today.

It is important to ask: Where is the OAS? Where is the European Community at this time of need, at this time of such brutal violation of human rights of the people of Haiti?

[*Translation*]

Of course, the UN passed several resolutions. The OAS also passed resolutions to the effect that Mr. Aristide, the democratically elected president, had to be reinstated.

Since February, a mere four or five months after the violent coup, the United States has dropped all effective form of sanctions against Haiti. The United States said on February 4 of last year that it was going to relax its economic sanctions. Why did it do that? It is very clear; it is because it had too many desperate Haitian refugees trying to escape violence and sure death in that country. They were turned back. They broke international law; and every humanitarian law there is regarding refugees.

At the same time, to justify this inhumane policy, the U.S. claimed that the situation was improving in Haiti.

[*English*]

We saw very early in February of last year the United States easing the trade embargo against Haiti. In November, a couple of months after the brutal coup in Haiti, we heard the fine words of the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs when she said in the House on November 4 of last year: "Canada's goal is simple and through these actions our determination must be clear to everyone". She went on to say: "With the measures I have just announced we have gone as far as any country in the hemisphere in responding to the OAS call for a strong signal to the regime in Port-au-Prince that we will not tolerate, that the will of the Haitian people will be thwarted. Together with our OAS partners we are determined to restore democracy in Haiti".

• (1700)

Here we are one year later and the murder continues, the violence continues, and the poverty is even more grinding for the people of Haiti.