

Routine Proceedings

Canada ratified the Geneva Convention in 1965. It is the intention of the Government to table implementing legislation for the protocols in the House in the near future. Following parliamentary approval and Royal Assent, Canada would join those countries that have reaffirmed their commitment to international humanitarian principles through ratification of the protocols.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, Canada takes great satisfaction in joining countries throughout the world to celebrate International Red Cross Day.

Together with Canada's constant efforts to promote peace, security and stability throughout the world, our country's humanitarian action is dedicated to providing relief and protection to those in need.

On behalf of the Canadian Government, I wish to congratulate the International Red Cross movement and express our appreciation for its vitally needed humanitarian services.

[*English*]

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Minister for recognizing 125 years of hard work, devotion, and unmatched dedication toward helping the needy, the poor, and the dispossessed. This is the type of devotion that has made the Red Cross an institution that is the most widely recognized and respected and, in some instances, feared for its objective and truthful reporting of situations around the world.

Approaching the Parliament buildings this morning I noticed a most beautiful sight. I saw the Canadian Red Cross flags flanked by our beautiful Canadian flags. The maple leaf of the Canadian flag is becoming a symbol of peace around the world. That is Canada's reputation today, and I think that we should keep that reputation. The cross on the Red Cross flag is known around the world as a symbol of humanitarian assistance.

My first encounter with the Red Cross movement was back in my primary school days at Orpington Public School in Saskatchewan. The school no longer stands. However, in 1939, 1940, and 1941 the teacher asked the class to make little kits containing a bar of soap, a face towel, a comb, and a toothbrush. These went to help the

war effort. Other students were asked to knit something. I remember knitting a beautiful black and white scarf. Of course, to me it was beautiful. At the end of the month the teacher collected all the projects to send overseas. I remember as a grade two student crying, not wanting to part with this scarf that I had knitted for the Red Cross effort. However, I did part with it. You will be happy to know, Mr. Speaker, I can still knit today thanks to the Red Cross training that I received in the primary grades.

I am sure the Minister would not mind if I added to her comments about the importance of the Junior Red Cross movement in Canada. As a former educator, I know the importance of the Junior Red Cross movement. Classes can elect their own president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. This teaches excellent leadership. Anything the class decides is again helping children in less advantaged countries.

Today there is an excellent program called "Child Alive". Students put together a package that contains water, salt, baking soda, and sugar. This package costs 10 cents. By contributing 10 cents to this package, children are saving thousands of lives through this rehydration program. The sole purpose of this little package is to help children who are dehydrated. This rehydration program saves thousands of lives.

Another excellent program with which the Minister would be pleased and impressed is the "Spellathon" program. Students collect pledges for the number of words they can spell. The money raised goes toward human development projects around the world. Those are only two of many projects in which the Junior Red Cross of Canada is involved.

I would also like to recognize the Youth Department of the Canadian Red Cross. That Department is involved in international youth exchanges. I was very pleased to hear that there will be such an exchange and a youth conference to be held in Solferino, Italy. Why is it important that students from around the world meet in Solferino, in northern Italy? Back in 1859 Henri Dunant, a Swiss, saw the thousands of wounded soldiers on the battlefield in pain, agony, and dying. He got a group of people together to do something for the wounded during the wars. This was the beginning of the world Red Cross movement.