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HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

Maurice Vellacott, MP
Saskatoon-Wanuskewin

Vellacott laments tragic loss of Turkish and Armenian lives; encouraged at reconciliation steps

For Immediate Release

April 24, 2009

OTTAWA – In the House of Commons today, Maurice Vellacott, MP for Saskatoon-Wanuskewin, said:

Mr. Speaker, the 20th century has been witness to some of humanity's greatest tragedies. One of these tragedies took place in 1915, when the Ottoman Empire collapsed under the onslaught of World War I.

After more than four centuries of peaceful relations, a wave of nationalism broke into a frenzy of violence between Turks and Armenians. Hundreds of thousands lost their lives in countless revolts, pitched battles, and massacres. Others fled abroad. Many have come to Canada and made it their new home.

This terrible tragedy continues to haunt Turks and Armenians alike. Recently, however, the Turkish and Armenian governments have taken important steps towards normalizing their relations in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding.

Our government supports recent efforts by the Turkish and Armenian governments to jointly study the still unresolved questions of their shared past. Canadians have a reputation as fair arbiters in conflicts all over the world. We encourage the governments of Turkey and Armenia to move forward in their desire to normalize their relations. Let's also encourage Canadians of Armenian and Turkish origin to come together in mutual understanding and respect.

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For further comment, call (613) 992-1966 or (613) 297-2249