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HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

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Vellacott believes Gomery's final report will shape more accountable governance

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OTTAWA – Justice Gomery's report, "Restoring Accountability," is a sad reminder of past events involving the abuse of taxpayer's dollars that tarnished the reputation of federalism in the province of Quebec, but it also provides a great opportunity to turn the page and start a new era of accountability, acknowledges Saskatoon-Wanuskewin Conservative MP Maurice Vellacott.

As Justice Gomery writes in his report, "The trust of Canadians in their political and administrative institutions has been badly damaged. Canadians want it restored." Vellacott says, "The new government will work hard to restore Canadians' trust in our institutions."

Vellacott notes that many of the recommendations are identical, or similar to, the proposals contained in the Conservative platform proposals for a new Federal Accountability Act.

Vellacott specifies that there are clear parallels between Justice Gomery's recommendations and the proposals for the Federal Accountability Act on: the accountability of Deputy Ministers to Parliament; the entry of political exempt staff into the public service; clearer rules for government advertising competitions; strengthening the role of the Registrar of Lobbyists; requiring accurate record keeping of government decisions; and an improved appointment process for the boards and officers of Crown Corporations.

Vellacott applauds Harper's commitment to introduce the Federal Accountability Act as the first major legislative action of the new government once Parliament is recalled.

Key quotes from the report:

"The trust of Canadians in their political and administrative institutions has been badly damaged. Canadians want it restored." p. 47

"In my first report, I was able to establish that there had been partisan political involvement in the administration of the Sponsorship Program; insufficient oversight of senior public servants; deliberate actions taken to avoid compliance with federal legislation and policies; a culture of entitlement among political officials and public servants involved with Sponsorship initiatives; and the refusal of Ministers, senior officials in the Prime Minister's Office and public servants to acknowledge any responsibility for the mismanagement that had occurred. I asked why it is that we have a system of responsible government, yet no one is prepared to accept responsibility for the abuses committed in the administration of the Sponsorship initiatives. No one has provided an answer." p. 197