

## **Literacy**

Statements by Members

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**Michael Savage** Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NS

Mr. Speaker, today around the world, 774 million adults lack basic literacy skills and one in five adults, mostly women, cannot read or write at all. Canada's literacy statistics are just as alarming for a country as wealthy as our own.

Literacy is not just about reading and writing, it is more than just understanding words on a page. Literacy is a powerful tool to eradicate poverty and to advance people socially and economically. Those who cannot access literacy skills are tragically left behind in society and, thanks to the government, we are leaving far too many people behind.

In the 2006 budget, the federal government announced it was cutting \$1 billion worth of what it called wasteful programs. Part of that was a \$17.7 million cut to adult literacy programming. One in three Canadians who struggle with literacy every day do not think much of that.

By improving literacy skills, a person increases his or her chances to find employment, to lift oneself out of poverty, find or create opportunities and make great contributions to the community.

Today let us recognize those who assist learners, those who bring meaning to words and who open the doors to better lives for those who struggle with literacy for their benefit and the benefit of all of us.